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ABSTRACT

This book addresses the special demands, problems, challenges, and tensions of collaborative research. Following an introduction by the editors, the articles and their authors are: "Collaborative Research: More Questions Than Answers" (Carole Edelsky and Chris Boyd); "Interactive Writing on a Computer Network: A Teacher/Researcher Collaboration" (JoAnn Mackinson and Joy Kreeft Peyton); "Looking Together: Collaboration as an Inquiry Process" (Judith Buchanan and Katherine Schultz); "Learning and Teaching Together" (Leslie Mangiola and Lucinda Pease-Alvarez); "The Collected Letters of Two Collaborative Researchers" (Katharine Davies Samway and Dorothy Taylor); "Strengthening Individual Voices through Collaboration" (Linda K. Crafton and Carol Porter); "Learning To Do Research Together" (Donna E. Alvermann and others); and "Working It Out: Collaboration as Subject and Method" (Bob Fecho and Susan L. Lytle). (NKA)

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ED 361 706

DELICATE BALANCES

COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

EDITED BY SARAH J. HUDELSON AND JUDITH WELLS LINDFORS

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Delicate Balances

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Collaborative Research in Language Education

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Preface

This collection of articles grew out of an NCTE roundtable session sponsored by the Research Foundation at the March 1989 Spring Conference in Charleston, South Carolina. The Research Foundation trustees felt that their newly funded category "Collaborative Research" needed both publicity and clarification. So, being research trustees at that time, we invited researchers currently engaged in collaborative research to participate in the roundtable session and interact with others about their work. We asked Carole Edelsky to begin the session with a keynote address. Several weeks after the conference, at Carole's suggestion, we invited the researcher-participants to contribute to this collection, developing their original roundtable abstracts into articles.

Seven of the research studies discussed at the original roundtable session are included in this book: Judy Buchanan and Kathy Schultz's study of the social context of language learning (especially writing) in a third/fourth-grade urban public school classroom; JoAnn Mackinson and Joy Peyton's study of cross-age deaf students' "conversations" on a computer network; Katharine Samway and Dorothy Taylor's study of the effects of written response on the literacy reflections of fourth- to eighth-grade ESL students, their teacher, and a long-distance researcher as they corresponded with one another; Leslie Mangiola and Lucinda Pease-Alvarez's study of a cross-age tutoring project involving fifth-grade tutors and their first-grade pupils; Linda Crafton and Carol Porter's study of eighth-grade basic language arts students' participation in research projects focusing on language use in their own communities; Bob Fecho and Susan Lytle's study of teachers collaborating as partners in a "cross-visitation" staff development program in which partner teachers regularly visited one another's classrooms; and Carole Edelsky's keynote address in which she reflects on collaborative research—she and Chris Boyd describe their work together as they probed Chris's notion of an "intellectually honest curriculum" in Chris's kindergarten classroom. The chapter by Donna Alvermann, James Olson, and Richard Umpleby was written specifically for this collection; it describes their study of the meaning that a class of lower-track ninth graders attached to their English teacher's oral and written language instruction. Their research project was funded by the Research Foundation under its category of collaborative research.

While these eight stories do not constitute a definition of collaborative research, taken together they provide a starting point for characterizing the approach by showing both commonalities and individual variations among them.

Our original guidelines to these researcher-authors were deliberately general, for it seemed appropriate, in an exploratory venture such as this one, to encourage the researchers to tell their own stories in their own ways. How else, we wondered, could we begin to characterize this new kind of research termed "collaborative" except to let individuals tell us, in their own ways, what this experience had been for them? How better could we begin to see its particular shapes and—across these particular shapes—some commonalities? If we were to set stricter guidelines, they would surely be based on our current notions of research and thus would require these researcher-authors to make their stories conform to established notions; they would not be able to carry us beyond those notions, letting something new emerge in whatever shape best suited their accounts. But while we wanted to support these researcher-authors' individual voices, we also wanted to provide sufficient guidance so that the resulting set of articles would be a somewhat harmonious chorus, a group of articles that at least belonged in the same book. Therefore we asked the researcher-authors to follow these minimal guidelines: (1) explain the research (e.g., research questions, subjects, ways of gathering and analyzing data); (2) describe the collaboration (e.g., how it began, evolved, dealt with problems); (3) summarize findings; and (4) reflect on the collaborative research experience (e.g., raise questions, suggest further possible directions). The eight stories in this collection are the researcher-authors' responses to these guidelines. In our view, the works provide a stunning example of *voice*, what Donald Graves calls "the person in the piece" (Graves, 1983, p. 227).

Wonderfully unique and warm-blooded persons speak in these stories. They all respond to the original guidelines in individual ways. You will find differences in *what* is told in each story—in the balance between description vs. reflection, in summarization vs. elaboration, in focus on findings vs. focus on process. And you will find differences in *how* the stories are told, differences in organizational structures and styles—some use actual written correspondence between the researchers while others employ a jointly written text or individually authored sections, etc. Rather than editing these stories toward some ideal uniformity of focus, structure, and style, we have preserved—indeed, we celebrate—the diversity of these stories and their telling.

You will find that we have maintained some conventions here and have modified others. As is common in scholarly publications, all co-authors are listed alphabetically (except for Edelsky's keynote address, with Boyd, that opens the collection). In all cases, it is to be understood that though the individual contributions are different in each research study, the researcher-authors feel that their contributions to the research and to the writing are "equal" in ways that make sense to them. The alphabetical listing is intended to convey joint ownership of the research and the writing. References to the abstracts prepared for the original roundtable session (some of which are different from the titles of the subsequent articles that evolved to be included in this volume) are given by authors' alphabetically listed names plus "1989" (e.g., Samway and Taylor, 1989). Cross-references from one article to another within this collection are cited as "see also chapter ___ of this volume."

You will notice that we have modified the surname convention within the text of the articles, referring to the researcher-authors by first name only. In this we have simply maintained what these researcher-authors did: without exception, where they refer to themselves or to each other by name within their text, they chose to use their first names. Because we have come to feel that it is the researchers' personal relationship which, more than any other single factor, characterizes the originality of "collaborative research," we have therefore preserved the first-name references; this different type of research calls for a different naming convention. But beyond that, the informality and friendliness of these first-name references invite you, the reader, into this extended conversation about collaborative research. These researcher-authors explain what collaborative research has been for them. We hope their stories will encourage you to think about what collaborative research might be for you.

Work Cited

Graves, D.H. (1983). *Writing: Teachers and children at work.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

1 Introduction

Judith Wells Lindfors
University of Texas at Austin

Sarah J. Hudelson
Arizona State University

This is a book about ongoing relationships between individuals who call themselves "collaborative researchers" and who call their endeavors "collaborative research." When we put together the Research Foundation roundtable that eventually became this collection, we wanted to find collaborators who were doing research in a variety of settings, research with learners of varying ages, ethnicities, and linguistic and cultural backgrounds. We wanted the collection to reflect the different kinds of questions that might be asked and answered collaboratively. When the chapters first came in, we were impressed with the uniqueness of each story. However, as we read and reread each narrative, what became even more apparent were the underlying similarities among the accounts.

- The researcher-authors tell of research endeavors in which the relationship between them was primary in their work, primary both as the starting point for the research itself and as an important motivator throughout. It is a collaborative *relationship* that precedes—and apparently allows—collaborative *research*.
- The researcher-authors describe that crucial relationship as a continuing delicate balance between autonomy (each researcher being separate, distinct, and individual) and affiliation (the researchers coming together in mutual support and friendship). We are reminded of the "double bind" that Tannen (1984) writes of, a situation some have likened to two porcupines trying to keep warm in winter; they come close together for warmth while maintaining their distance, respecting those quills: "[H]uman beings are always balancing the paradoxical fact that they are simultaneously individual and social creatures. They need each other and yet they need to be separate" (p. 17). Such is the relationship, continually negotiated, that these researcher-authors describe.
- The researcher-authors tell of the distinctive expertise that each partner brought to the research effort. They tell, too, of

the different roles they played within the research, of the different goals they had for the research, of the different benefits each gained from the research, and of the different place the research occupied in the "larger life" of each researcher.

- The researcher-authors tell of ways that the collaborative relationship they shared spread into the research itself, allowing "subjects" increasingly to become fellow researchers, helping to gather data and to make sense of it.
- The researcher-authors tell of the changes over time in their research, both the slow changes as the research evolved, and the more sudden changes as the researchers responded to unexpected circumstances.

The eight stories here are positive, strong, warm, upbeat. Yet their authors do not hedge about the special demands, problems, and challenges of this kind of research. They are forthright about the sometimes overwhelming demands on time, about the unequal value placed upon the research by the different communities to which the researchers belong, and about the special difficulty for the teacher-researcher who tries to balance the demands of the research project against the many other activities in which he or she has to engage as a member of an educational community.

Their honest discussion of the challenges inherent in this kind of research raises the question, "Is collaborative research for everyone?" This is an important issue, especially given that it seems to require a special—and rare—kind of relationship between the partners. No, it probably isn't for everyone. While it may seem appealing to jump on the bandwagon of collaboration, the value of this kind of research should not be overemphasized. Researchers need to recognize that though they may engage in collaborative projects, it is not necessary, desirable, or even possible to do so to the exclusion of other kinds of research efforts. Collaborative research needs to be seen as one of several options to be used when both possible and appropriate.

One research option. And now comes the hardest part of all: to characterize that option. Characterize, not define. Perhaps we would do best to leave it to the eight research accounts to provide that characterization.

It is interesting for us, after working on this book, to consider the description of collaborative research given in the NCTE Research Foundation's brochure. The announcement of the newly funded research category of "Collaboration Grants" prompted the original roundtable session which subsequently developed into this book. Here is that original description of Collaboration Grants:

> Collaboration Grants are intended to foster cooperative research conducted by pre-K–14 classroom teachers and university researchers. These grants support classroom-based research which calls for collaboration between a Teacher-Researcher and a University Researcher. . . . The Teacher-Researcher and the University Researcher must be co-investigators.

This description now seems remarkably simplistic and naïve. Some of the problems are immediately obvious: the misuse of the word "cooperative" (a research endeavor that belongs primarily to one person who is assisted by another), the assumption of just two people in the partnership, and the further assumption that they will be a classroom teacher and a university researcher. But more important, perhaps, the description completely misses what seems to have been the essence of "collaborative" research in the eight research stories recounted here: its continuing and evolving nature over time; its essential dialogic character; and above all, its life within and dependence upon a relationship among the partners, a relationship characterized by mutual trust and respect, a relationship simultaneously affiliative and autonomous.

The original intention of this collection was to inform, by showing what collaborative research is (the Research Foundation trustees who wrote the description above thought they knew). But the collection may instead perform the important service of helping us to *explore* the terrain, to *discover* what collaborative research *might* be.

Work Cited

Tannen, D. (1984). *Conversational style: Analyzing talk among friends.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

2 Collaborative Research: More Questions than Answers

Carole Edelsky
Arizona State University

Chris Boyd
Roadrunner Elementary School, Phoenix, Arizona

In the past few years, collaboration has become the "correct" mode for engaging in various kinds of work. Not only are relationships between institutions (e.g., home and school, government and business, industry and schools) now supposed to be collaborative, but so are such ongoing activities as counseling (people who were formerly "patients" are now "clients") or manufacturing (workers are now to collaborate with managers in setting production goals). Hierarchy is out (or at least less acceptable); collaboration is in.

If our tone here is cynical, it is not because we disapprove of such a shift in ideals. Indeed, we welcome it. But we suspect that in a society overbuilt with hierarchical structures, this shift may be more easily desired than achieved. This is not to claim that research collaborations are impossible. On the contrary, this volume alone proves that such collaborations do indeed occur. Unlike what Clarke (1990) calls "generic prescriptions" in education that "ring hollow" when one looks for accompanying details of execution, specific advice, or even accounts of living examples (e.g., generic calls for individual freedom, critical democracy, or education for empowerment), collaborative research is a genre that *can* be located. But it *is* our claim that, like other collaborations, collaborative research in education may be a phenomenon with a too-smooth exterior that masks internal contradictions and tensions. What follows is not an extensive unveiling of those tensions beneath the surface; rather, it is an exploration of just a few of the many exciting yet possibly troubling aspects of this innovation in educational research.

Because collaborative research is neither simple nor unambiguously satisfying, it is a phenomenon that is best viewed from more

than one perspective. Therefore, in the following exploration, we will deliberately sort out some of our views and present them separately. Our different "takes" on collaborative research, however, will revolve around the one constant feature in all collaborations—relationships. Relationships will provide our pivot for discussing the absence of simplicity, the ambiguity, and the jumble of thorns and roses that marks collaborative research. We will present three of the many relationships that we have noted in our own collaboration, and explore these from each of our perspectives. Then we will let those explorations lead to some definitions, which will lead in turn to a further discussion of contradictions. But before we present our individual perspectives on issues raised by our experience in researching together, we offer a brief description of that ongoing research.

Background Information: A Brief Description of One Collaborative Research Project

One initial goal of the research was for Carole to further understand how a teacher generates curriculum and for Chris to better understand and improve her teaching. But an equally important goal was to create a reason for each of us to spend more professional time together. It was the latter, in fact, that propelled the project. Therefore, rather than beginning with a genuine question, we had to self-consciously search for a research topic. We finally found one in an article Chris had written about her classroom. She had used the term "intellectually honest" to describe her curriculum. We decided to try to discover what she meant by that—the nuances, boundaries, prototypes, and grey areas of an intellectually honest curriculum. Since Chris sees herself both as someone "off on my own in my classroom" and as someone using her classroom to learn from, such a project would help her to define more clearly what she was doing and to focus her learning.

Our research questions, then, were: What does an intellectually honest curriculum mean to Chris? How does the curriculum appear to students? To parents? We gathered data in the following ways to answer these questions. Chris kept a journal of her experiences, insights, and frustrations; Carole used these journal entries as a basis for interviewing Chris after sessions in class. Both of us conducted various types of interviews with students and parents, asking them their perceptions of the curriculum. The student interviews took three forms: (a) audiotape-recorded large-group interviews during which we showed children videotapes of classroom activities to prod their dis-

cussion; (b) notes taken during spontaneous interviews with individuals or groups during the school day; and (c) audiotape-recorded group interactions about the topic, "What goes on in this classroom?" Parent interviews were conducted individually. Both of us analyzed and interpreted the data.

Working on this research project entailed at least three kinds of relationships: relationships between us, the co-researchers; relationships between the research and our other professional activities; and our relationships with the research itself. As we mentioned earlier, these relationships raised different issues for both of us. Most likely, they also impinge on other researchers in non-uniform ways.

Relationships among Co-Researchers

Not all collaborative research involves a university researcher and a teacher-researcher. Some collaborations include students as co-researchers (Cochran-Smith, Garfield, & Greenberger, 1989; Samway & Taylor, 1989; see also chapter 6 this volume). Some include neither a university researcher nor a teacher but are collaborations between students (Goswami, 1989). Others are between teachers. For example, the Philadelphia Teachers' Learning Cooperative and the Boston Women Teachers Group have each supported research partnerships among their members (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990). Students and teachers have also worked together on research projects to answer questions important to both groups (Goswami & Stillman, 1987). These institutional relationships among the co-researchers are obviously an important factor in their relationships both inside and outside the research setting.

Within the research setting, roles may be either identical or complementary, but they are not oppositional. We refer here not to static roles or labeled identities (e.g., researchers by profession who happen to be on vacation) but to roles-in-action, roles enacted in a relationship (e.g., researchers researching). Examples of complementary roles are writer and illustrator, doctor and nurse, grocery store cashier and bagger. Each role-player in these arrangements makes a different but necessary contribution to a common enterprise. However, it is conceivable that, given the right circumstances, one multitalented person could "do it all" (the writer could illustrate, the grocery cashier could bag, the doctor could care for the patient postoperatively). This is not the case with oppositional roles (e.g., sales clerk and customer, thera-

pist and client, rescuer and rescued). In the life events in which people act together as "relational opposites" (Fromkin & Rodman, 1983) and in which those role relationships loom large, "you can't have one without the other," as the song goes. For research to be collaborative, the parties may not be acting as relational opposites—researcher and researched.[1]

There is also a relationship between the collaborators that exists *outside* the research. It is that relationship which usually accounts for how the collaboration came to be in the first place (Peyton & Mackinson, 1989; see also chapter 3 of this volume; Crafton & Porter, 1989; see also chapter 7 of this volume; Lytle & Fecho, 1989)—that is, the research is embedded in an overriding relationship; that relationship is not simply an instrumental means to completing a piece of research. In our case, our relationship began over ten years ago. Carole had heard about Chris's extraordinary classroom and had gone to see for herself. Over the years we became friends (e.g., we go to movies together, talk on the telephone, and so on). When the research is finished, the relationship (we hope) will continue. This contrasts with the usual relationship between researcher and researched, even in the most egalitarian qualitative research. Normally, the researcher first "gains access" and *then* "establishes rapport" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). In the present case, the relationships between the collaborators obviously intertwine both within and outside the research setting. Indeed, it is our own overriding relationship, as well as our status as *co*-researchers, that prevents Chris from simply being the object of research in our study.

Chris's Perspective

My relationship with Carole is a critical factor in this project. Respect and trust have allowed us to work together; we respect each other professionally and trust each other emotionally. This originates from a meeting of the minds in my classroom; over the years, Carole helped me look hard at what I was doing in order to explain it. This aided my own understanding and stimulated my growth professionally.

It is important to me to work with someone I respect when that work involves such an intense look at what I do. I tend to operate on the edge of what I know, a tenuous place to let someone in "from above." That person needs to be someone who understands and respects that precarious position and can interact with it. Carole respects my ownership of what I do enough to understand and to *not* understand. It is

the same with my students: I need to respect what they are doing, work hard to understand, be able to share with them, and help when I am needed. But there are also times when I have to acknowledge that I do *not* understand as they work through something tenuous that they have not yet formed well enough to articulate or demonstrate.

This area of respect and ownership is directly connected to the honesty of the relationship. Carole asks honest questions in an effort to understand what I am saying or doing. Hidden agendas and questions that already have answers have no place here, but honest questions are welcome and important. Moreover, I can be honest and not try to put up a front when it looks as if my work or my words are not matching my professed ideals.

Carole's Perspective

University researchers involved in collaborative research often mention the need for their teacher collaborators to be good teachers. Peyton (1989), for example, said she has to respect her collaborator as an outstanding professional. The Peyton-Mackinson collaborative study of an innovation in the education of deaf elementary school students (described in the present volume) would be impossible if the teacher had not been inventive and insightful. In the 1970s, Lawrence Stenhouse (Ruddick & Hopkins, 1985), a teacher-educator noted for his anti-elitism, argued for the importance of doing research in the classrooms of the best teachers. Lindfors (1984) has added to that argument by pointing to the irony of doing qualitative research in just any classroom, producing wonderfully rich descriptions of less-than-admirable practice.

It is not only that I want my collaborative partner to be "good" so that the practices we will study and describe will be good ones. For me, the issue also concerns what I think the purpose of educational research is, and what I am personally comfortable with when relating to a *peer*, to a *co*-researcher. Research performed by anthropologists, linguists, sociolinguists, and sociologists who use classrooms as research sites can have as its sole purpose the understanding of a phenomenon. But for educators (or for me, at least), research has to have the additional aim of improving the educational enterprise. If I believe that the purpose of research is to improve education, and if my research is about a particular classroom or teacher, then unless I think the individual is an excellent classroom teacher, I will want to change either that classroom or the teacher. Much outstanding classroom research works in this way: both researcher and teacher agree that the

researcher will help the teacher work on some kind of change (which implies improvement). For me, however, if the teacher and I are supposed to be peers—*co*-researchers—then I cannot be in a position to want to improve her practice. The teacher, then, not only has to be good in her bailiwick but in mine, too. That is, I cannot just understand and respect her premises about the research topic simply because, as a professional, she is entitled to her own employable theoretical notions; I also have to share her premises because they seem most theoretically adequate to me, too. If I harbor even the slightest wish to change her basic premises, I have put myself in a superior position and cannot, then, honestly feel as though we are peers in the project. I solve this potential dilemma by finding someone I agree with. That way, I can keep my research purpose of changing/improving educational practice, but it is other people's practice I am trying to influence, not my co-researcher's.

My need (shared, I believe, by other university researchers) to have a good teacher as a collaborator may well reflect status differences outside the research. Chris acknowledged this difference in status when she referred to me as being "from above." Admittedly, she did emphasize the need to have respect for the university researcher, and she did note that maybe all researchers would not be able to appreciate or even *see* the value of her "on the edge" thinking and teaching. Buchanan (Schultz & Buchanan, 1989; see also chapter 4 of this volume) joined her in commenting on preferred qualities in a university researcher-collaborator. She expressed relief in having a researcher (Schultz) in the classroom who was recently a classroom teacher herself, who shared so much with Buchanan that, frequently, "they could finish each other's sentences" (Buchanan, 1989). Mackinson chose Peyton (Peyton & Mackinson, 1989; see also chapter 3 of this volume) to help her research the innovation in Mackinson's classroom because she believed Peyton would be flexible enough to adapt a project to changing classroom conditions. While it has been possible to find these examples, I believe that, in general, there is more concern—and more privilege given to voicing that concern—about whether the teacher-researcher is a good teacher than about whether the university researcher is a good researcher.

Relationship of the Research Project to the Researchers' Other Professional Activities

Chris will indicate below that, at first, conducting research on her own teaching had an almost paralytic effect. Goswami (1989) has said that,

for teachers and students, conducting research on their institutional activities requires creative structuring of time within the institution. It also requires zones of activity which are free of pressures for grades. Thus, the research project not only creates change for its principal actors (some of that change unwanted), but it also requires certain changes in the particular professional or institutional context and in ways of working within that context in order for the research to happen at all.

Sometimes, a collaborative research project interacts reflexively with other professional activities. Consider Lytle and Fecho's (1989) study of a teacher-initiated collegial model of staff development. This project, based on a view of teaching as a deliberative rather than a technological activity—a view that makes intellectual activity the heart of teaching (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990)—is part of the resistance to de-skilling teachers (Apple, 1983; Edelsky, 1988). Lytle and Fecho's research has not only examined deliberation and inquiry, it has pushed the researchers to emphasize deliberation and inquiry in their other professional activities, which has, in turn, made the original project activities (not only the analysis) even more deliberative. Samway and Taylor have indicated that their project increased reflectiveness within their other work. They found themselves carrying on a kind of telepathic conversation with each other as they read, made observations, and planned and went about their work (Samway & Taylor, 1989; see also chapter 6 of this volume). Thus, in considering the relationship of the research project to one's other professional work (teaching, other research, consulting, and so on), it is not always necessary to show "findings" being "applied." In fact, to extend Bissex's (1988) comments about teacher research to collaborative research, the most appropriate question is not, "What does that prove?" It is, "What did you learn from that?" And it turns out that what the collaborative researchers "learned from that"—internalized from that so that their other work is changed—may well include new insights garnered from the methodology, the guiding metaphors, and the working relationships within the project, as well as new understandings of the research topic itself.

Chris's Perspective

The initial impact of this research project on my teaching shocked me. I was frozen; I couldn't teach. Before we began, I was excited about the project partly because I constantly observe, evaluate, and restructure as part of my normal teaching stance, so this would provide an opportunity to formalize some of that evaluative activity—to look closely at how and

why it happens. Unfortunately, I felt a compulsion to fix everything that did not jibe with what I was trying to do, instead of learning from it and moving on, projecting changes for the future as I normally did.

To keep from becoming immobilized by my self-consciousness, I initially had to ignore the research questions; I just did my "homework" in my journal and got back to letting my classroom teach me, the way it had before. It reminded me of the way Betsy Byers and Doris Buchanan Smith said that their stories have minds of their own. I had to move away from trying to tell the story and, instead, watch and learn as the story told itself. I then had to look back, record, and evaluate for future reference. This research had to become a way of observing what I did rather than be allowed to take over like some sort of imperious curriculum guide.

Carole's Perspective

I worry that the content of our projects does not often expose or challenge social structural arrangements. Most of the collaborative research I know about (our study included) *does* expose the error of the teacher's thinking as technocratic or the error of treating teachers as deliverers of instruction, but it rarely does anything about changing structural conditions of students' lives or our own lives in school. It is rarely about some topic that would promote curricula to help students and teachers analyze how social class or race or gender operate in people's lives. Collaborative research projects often look at literacy but not at why certain groups of people cannot use their literacy to change their status in the system (Graves, 1989). Our projects tend not to look at how systems are more than just accumulations of individuals, not to look at how individual biographies interact with societal structures, not to look at how inequalities are both accomplished and pre-established, and not to look at *how* the world is both "of our making and beyond our making" (Mehan & Wood, 1975). It reminds me of much of the activity within the grass-roots teacher movement (Edelsky, 1988)—nonhierarchical, participatory (empowering of individuals), but not necessarily emancipatory (for low-status, low-power groups divided by gender, race, or class) (Altwerger, 1989).

Relationships between the Researchers and Their Research

When we refer to the relationships between the researchers and their research, we are talking, on the one hand, of the roles each researcher

plays in carrying out the research (i.e., the "impact" of the researchers on the research) and, on the other, of the impact of the research on the researchers. For example, in their project investigating cross-age tutoring, Pease-Alvarez and Mangiola's roles changed throughout, as did the tutoring project itself (Pease-Alvarez & Mangiola, 1989; see also chapter 5 of this volume).

Chris's Perspective

I have observed an interesting mingling of roles as Carole and I attend to the research. We switch back and forth as we each become a student or an expert, depending on the demands of the situation. My area of expertise involves the *what* of the research; I am the only one who can explain what is happening in my head and how it relates to my classroom decisions. And I must assume that responsibility. I remember an early interview session in which I felt at a loss for answers. I realized then that in this area of the research, we were both dependent on my ability to introspect and report; we were *both* going to be only as "smart" as I was. Carole was, in essence, the student. We could help one another, but I was going to have to be the one to generate the material with which we'd work.

Carole's expertise is the *how* of the research. I don't have a clue about research procedures—about what to do with all those interview transcripts, about how to make them mean anything to me or to anyone else. Other than what I learned from my own lectures, comments, and writings, as well as those generated by students and parents during the interviews, I do not understand the processes of working with a mass of data. I have faith, however, that there is more to be learned and that Carole will teach me how to mine that pile of transcripts.

Carole's Perspective

In many projects where the collaborators have been a university researcher and a teacher-researcher, someone is pleased to point out that it is the teacher, in addition to the university researcher, who has identified what to analyze or who did the major interpreting. This evidence is reported to prove "peerness"— because peerness *needs* to be proven. The situation contrasts with the usual one where the teacher is the supporting player, where the two are *not* peers.

It is not only that expectations about roles within the research reveal "outside-world" status discrepancies; the entire project may have a different meaning to each collaborator. For instance, in a col-

laboration between a classroom teacher and university professor that investigates the teacher's classroom, one researcher is the insider and the other is the outsider. A duality such as this provides real benefits in the interpretation of data. It also contributes to an interesting variation in the meaning the research has for the researcher. Because it is the teacher's classroom/teaching/ideas/life that is being researched, the findings are crucial for her. For the university person, they are merely interesting. For Chris, the research has been a way to hold a mirror up to her teaching. For me, the research has been as much an excuse to schedule myself into a wonderful classroom on a regular basis as it is to answer a research question. It is a chance for me to encounter classroom examples that can inform my other work—and make it credible (which makes this spill over into the second relationship, the relationship of the research to the rest of my professional activities).

Because of these different meanings the research has for the teacher and the university person, each might choose different genres for reporting and different audiences to report to, if the choice were left up to them individually (Florio-Ruane, 1986). Often, the teacher and the researcher are involved in the project for ultimately different purposes. For example, the teacher might be involved to improve her teaching (and thus, to inform herself), while the researcher might be involved to gather data for a dissertation (and thus, to inform an academic community [Buchanan, 1989]).

Now That We've Examined It, What Is It?

Some of the issues that have surfaced in our examination of relationships in collaborative research are trust, respect, status, roles, and meanings. These are also implicated to varying degrees in thinking about the nature of collaborative research. Bissex (1988) has advised against defining it. With a new type of research, such as "teacher research" or "collaborative research," an attempt to define sets up premature boundaries and "binds its feet" before it has a chance to run. We agree in one sense. We do not want to set up definitional criteria that delegitimize some collaborative efforts while "certifying" others. But producing a gatekeeping definition is not the only possible outcome of an investigation into the nature of a phenomenon. Probing meanings can also enlighten in unexpected ways.

As we suggested at the start, "collaboration" and "collaborative" have become buzzwords. They share that status with terms like

"paradigm shift," "process writing," "empowerment," and "whole language"— important, substantive ideas that have been reduced and marketed as trendy labels applied to anything and everything. Buzzword status is not entirely negative, however. When a named idea becomes a buzzword in education, it captures the scent, at least, of a shift in the winds of practice. For as long as it remains current, the term benefits those who are working with the ideas behind the label. Until it goes out of fashion, it creates a space and substantiates people taking risks and making changes in the direction of the ideas behind buzzword labels (Edelsky, 1987; Edelsky, 1989; Clarke, 1990). But buzzword status has a dark underbelly. It is not simply that the buzzword is applied promiscuously. It is that, on a grand scale, it substitutes for change (i.e., people switch labels instead of substance). Worse, it prevents change. Adoption of the label proclaims that the old idea has given way to the new, implying, therefore, that the promised benefits of the new should be in evidence. But since nothing changed except the label, the promise cannot be kept. The claim can then be made that "*that* didn't work," and any further efforts to work with the new idea can be abandoned for good "empirical" reasons.

This judgment of buzzwords could well lead to the conclusion that, contrary to Bissex's argument, we should indeed try to set some limits on what can legitimately be called collaborative research. However, as we indicated earlier, we would rather use collaborative research's achievement of buzzword status as a reason to now sit back and chew on the term, to tease out some of the many meanings that adhere to it, to reflect on the issues involved in the researcher-research relationships we explored in order to reveal the tensions often glossed over in well-deserved praise of collaborative research, and to raise some questions rather than answer them.

Research

Let us begin with "research." According to Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1989), research is systematic, intentional, self-critical inquiry. Stenhouse (Ruddick & Hopkins, 1985) adds that it is such inquiry made public. Research does not have to follow the traditional university model. In fact, Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1990) propose four categories of teacher research, only one of which approaches a traditional model of research. However, this definition has some very broad boundaries. A teacher may well take a "research-y" stance in her day-to-day teaching; that is, she may be a hypothesizer, a keen observer, a "kidwatcher" (Goodman, 1985). But this does not mean that every day she is teach-

ing, she is also researching. Indeed, when she does begin to work on a research project, she knows the difference (Chris's initial paralysis is an example).

If research in general has to be deliberate, systematic, and public, collaborative research in particular should probably be qualitative. Recent interest in qualitative research in education most likely has been an important factor in encouraging more teachers to become researchers (Strickland, 1988). Increased understanding of the notion of context and increased appreciation of an inside perspective make the teacher a "natural" as a researcher of her own classroom. Add to the importance of "context" and "participant's perspective" the dynamic, fluid character of classrooms and the need for a research design that can accommodate such fluidity, and it becomes apparent why the most appropriate type of research for collaborative studies of classrooms is qualitative.

Collaboration

Some cooperative ventures are called collaborations and some are not. When two people write music and lyrics, that is a collaboration; so is co-authoring a book. The same is true of some research done by a teacher and a professor, a student and a teacher, a community member and a teacher. But some cooperative ventures are not called collaborations. In business it is a partnership, not a collaboration. In athletics it is a team; so it is with team teaching.

What are the features that earn the label "collaboration"? Clearly, more than cooperation is involved (Burton, 1988). Something seems to be a collaboration when it is nonhierarchical and nonexploitative, when it is not based on relational opposites (i.e., activities involving such "opposites" as salesclerk and customer, portrait painter and subject of the portrait, or therapist and client are not immediately thought of as collaborations), when it involves a language product (usually written), and when it is voluntary. But then there is also collaboration with the enemy. Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* defines collaboration in several ways:

1. as joint, willing labor in a project involving composition or research to be jointly credited;
2. as cooperating with or willingly assisting an enemy of one's own country;
3. as cooperating with an agency with which one is not directly connected in some political or economic effort (e.g., two libraries collaborating in a funding drive).

The varied dictionary definitions are not as disparate as they seem. Underlying each of them is the implication of something unusual, some *unexpected* cooperation. Included in our meanings for the word is the probability that there are different (maybe even opposing) interests to be contended with in collaborations. (No wonder we are so delighted when we can overcome some of those oppositions!) Rodgers and Hart collaborating on a musical, Mackinson and Peyton collaborating on research about computer networking, and prisoners of war collaborating with their captors would seem to constitute an unlikely category. Yet they have that underlying critical thread tying them together—unexpectedness.

Other polar opposite or seemingly disparate terms have bits of underlying commonality, too. "Rational" is sometimes set in opposition to "aesthetic," but these can each be deconstructed (Eagleton, 1983) to show that underlying "rational" are aesthetic meanings of sense, leading to sensory and sensual; and embedded in "aesthetic" is the idea of order and pattern. "Oral" and "literate" make another false opposition, i.e., to be "literate" about music, computers, and so on, is to be "conversant." "Art" and "science" both require experimentation. According to Stenhouse (Ruddick & Hopkins, 1985), an artist is a researcher par excellence, and the best art is research and experimentation to improve the truth of the performance, not the technique for its own sake. In fact, in Stenhouse's view, it is by virtue of being an artist that the teacher is a researcher.

To summarize, collaborative research is systematic inquiry made public, conducted by two or more people whose joint activity is unusual in some sense. Could it be that such cooperation is unexpected because of built-in tensions or conflicting interests?

Contradictions and Questions

One tension that arises when two people investigate some aspect of the life of one of them, as Cochran-Smith (1989) has said, is a pull between collaboration and critique. When the topic is the teacher's teaching and not the professor's—even when both share theoretical views on important elements of her teaching—how does investigatory critique remain collaborative? More problematic yet, when the relationship is institutionally unequal (e.g., when the collaborators are student teachers on the one hand and professors on the other), how does that affect the collaboration? How does it affect the talk? What gets censored by whom? Should that tension be resolved? *Can* it be?

We have suggested all along that status differences emanating outside of collaborative research often lurk in the shadows inside it and impinge on it. Status differences are not the only source of tension, however; differing professional expectations are another. These produce different benefits for each party. Those differences may not only be distinct, they may also be unequal in a way that begins to rankle over time. For instance, one important component of the university researcher's identity as a professional is that of researcher. She is expected to conduct research, and the university reward system acknowledges that expectation. For the researcher interested in practice, a collaborative project allows her to learn more about practice. She can sometimes negotiate for it to become part of her regular assignment; she gains in professional stature; and in some universities, she gets personnel benefits in the bargain. (In others, collaborative research is devalued. It may harm rather than enhance chances for tenure [Burton, 1988].) In contrast, doing research is not an expected part of a teacher-researcher's professional identity, and her school district is not likely to figure such activity into its reward structure. The consequence of the teacher's participation in a collaborative research project is that she acquires a mirror she can trust and also gains in her (and others') status as a professional; but she is unlikely to receive any reduced load or merit pay based on her research activity. In some cases, as Myers (1985) observes, her participation may add an oppressive burden to her workload. Can the consequences be merely different, i.e., separate but equal? Or are we kidding ourselves?

And then there is the issue of whether it matters if the relationship between researchers starts and ends with the research project or whether it is embedded in a larger relationship. Warren (1990) contends that no matter how egalitarian the research enterprise, researchers cannot help but betray their informants—by revealing too much that is identifying, by reaping the benefits of good data from someone else's life crises, and so on. Does such unwitting betrayal also attend relations between researchers, rather than only between researcher and researched? If the relationship does not continue beyond the project, does someone feel used, objectified, and/or valued only for her classroom or for her research expertise?

Then there is the tension between conservative versus emancipatory ends for the research. When research topics tend to lead the eye away from seeing how whole groups are kept in their place or when the research does not challenge the ideology of materials or curriculum, can it do anything more than contribute to keeping things as they

are? What would it take to make collaborative research nonhierarchical, empowering, *and* emancipatory?

Despite these tensions and questions, collaborative research has been an exciting and rewarding (if differentially so) activity for many in status-marked institutions; it has diminished the differences in status to some degree. Where interests and purposes of the education personnel are different, it has offered one small site for common purposes. Though we have emphasized the tensions which are usually ignored or smoothed over, we believe the benefits of collaborative research—complex though they may be—are greater. Our final question, then, is posed in full recognition of that lopsided scale: How can more people be encouraged to engage in this system-constrained, yet system-challenging enterprise?

Notes

1. Relationships within the research setting may also be characterized by reciprocity. For example, some feminist researchers who try to study their informants in a nonhierarchical manner and who ask their informants to self-disclose might then reciprocate by self-disclosing themselves (Lather, 1986). When there is reciprocity, there is a giving back in kind: I invite you, you invite me back. Collaborations between researchers are not reciprocal in this sense. In collaborative research, both parties do the inviting.

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3 Interactive Writing on a Computer Network: A Teacher/Researcher Collaboration

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In the past few years, computer technology has opened up dynamic new possibilities for using written language. Among them are the many different ways now possible for students to share written text with each other. In some school programs, students across the country and even around the world send messages to each other, write newsletters together, and participate in collaborative science and social studies projects (Cohen & Miyake, 1986; Cummins, 1986; Levin, Riel, Miyake, & Cohen, 1987; Riel, 1983; Sayers, 1989). University students take classes without going to the campus by communicating with their professor and other students through electronic mail and computer conferences (Black, Levin, Mehan, & Quinn, 1983; Hilz, 1986; Kaye, 1987; Quinn, Mehan, Levin, & Black, 1983). Computer networks allow students and teachers to read and comment on-line on each other's texts in progress (Neuwirth, Kaufer, Keim, & Gillespie, 1988), share data files for collaborative research (Thompson, 1990), and display a section of their writing, as they produce it, to the class for discussion (Thompson, 1989).

Our project involves a particular kind of text sharing: the use of a local-area computer network for real-time written interaction within a classroom. At Gallaudet University, a liberal arts university for deaf and hard-of-hearing students located in Washington, D. C., a local-area network is used to give the students opportunities to interact in written English in order to increase their access to English and improve

their understanding and production of it. For many deaf people, some form of sign language is their first language, and English is their second. Deaf and hard-of-hearing people have access to English through written texts, but usually not as hearing people experience it--as a natural, spontaneous way to communicate. Since access to spoken English is limited or nonexistent, reading and writing can be fraught with difficulties; the problems that deaf people, from children to adults, have with written English are well documented (Charrow, 1981; Quigley & Paul, 1984).

At Gallaudet, students in some English classes spend their class periods interacting in writing on the network. Each student (and the teacher, if participating) sits at a computer terminal and types a message of one to ten lines in the lower, private part of the computer screen. When a writer hits the send key, the message is sent immediately to all the screens in the classroom, tagged with the name of the person who wrote it. As messages are typed and sent, they scroll up the screen somewhat like a playscript. Part of the scrolling text is always visible in the upper screen, and participants can scroll back to review previous portions at any time. Written discussions can take place among the members of an entire class or among small groups or pairs on separate channels. A transcript of each interaction is automatically saved and can be printed at the end of the session. As a result, these students have opportunities to use English in an interactive context and to see it modeled by others. They experience the give-and-take, continual feedback, and negotiation of interaction. Their interactions can lead to, follow, and be interspersed with more extended reading and composing. For their English classes, at least, they are immersed in English (Peyton & Batson, 1986).

The Focus of Our Project: Computer Networking with Elementary Students

The network at Gallaudet had been in use with college students for over a year when JoAnn Mackinson decided to try it on campus with her eight-year-old students at Kendall Demonstration Elementary School. The students were all deaf children of deaf parents, highly proficient for their age in both sign language and written English, and working at or above their grade level in their school subjects. JoAnn believed that, like dialogue journal writing, which she had used extensively with her elementary school deaf students (Bailes, Searls, Slobodzian, & Staton, 1986), network interaction offered opportunities for

them to explore in new ways the functions, processes, and styles of written English.

Unlike the Gallaudet approach, in which entire classes (of up to eight or ten students) interact on the network, JoAnn paired her students on separate channels (each still sitting at a computer terminal). Before going to the network lab, the class discussed in sign language how the interactions might proceed, some possible topics or stories, and the importance of staying with a topic and paying attention to and building on their partner's contribution. Each pair decided on a topic they would write about or a story they would create together. After the network sessions, back in their classroom, the students discussed and edited their transcripts.

After a year, JoAnn collaborated with another teacher, who had a younger class of less proficient writers (deaf children of hearing parents). The six new students were paired on the network with JoAnn's six students, who were now older and more proficient network users and writers. Paired partners were rotated each session so that each student had several opportunities during the year to interact with each student in the other class. JoAnn often wrote in a pair with another student when one of the students was absent, or joined a pair of students to make a group of three, thus providing a teacher's language model. The other teacher circulated among the students, helping them by communicating in sign language when they needed it.

At this point, JoAnn asked Joy to join her. She wanted to document more systematically the dynamics she was noticing and to examine more carefully the language development she thought she was seeing, and she wanted a researcher to work with her. Joy had been working as a researcher with the computer networking project at Gallaudet, documenting language use and development in the network interactions of the college students, and was delighted to have the opportunity to work with elementary children. JoAnn had already collected network transcripts from the older students from her first year of work with them, and we decided to follow them and the new students during the second year— observing in the lab as JoAnn and the students worked on the network, collecting the transcripts from each student pair, and analyzing the transcripts. (This project and its results are described in more detail in Peyton & Mackinson, 1989.)

What follows is a transcript from one of those interactions. Andrew was the older student, about eight years of age; he had two deaf sisters and was the child of deaf parents. He was artistic and creative, loved to write stories, and had written many collaborative stories on

the network with his classmates. Kelly was about seven-and-a-half years old, the child of hearing parents. This was her first year on the network, and she had had limited experience with creative story writing and collaboration. Before they got on the network, they had discussed writing a story about a pregnant woman.

Andrew: hello kelly!

Kelly: hello andrew

Andrew: and we are talking about a funny woman that are pregnant

Kelly: WHO

Andrew: a story

Kelly: I NOT UNDERSTAND

Andrew: I MEAN A STORY

Kelly: I NOT UNDERSTAND
I MADE A MISTAKE

Andrew: YOU BEGIN THE STORY

Kelly: OK THE WOMAN SAY MY BABY IS BORN

Andrew: and she zoomed by car to home

Kelly: SHE SAY i love my baby
boy

Andrew: and ran and went o refraightor and get a baby food and slammed the ref door and the baby said foody yuck! so woman gave hhiom a mud to eat! then boby said yummy! then woman founded out that he is from alien!

Kelly: the woman lost her baby
woman is cry

Andrew: then baby changed to a monster than he said ARRRRRRRGGGHHH! NTHEN A LADY said ahhhhh! and ran to a car and changed into a amazing lady and she flied and hitted a monster and a monster said ARRRGGGHHH! and tried to grab the amazing lady

We collected around five or six paired conversations like this one each week, and we began to think together about what was happening and to look at the transcripts. We were interested in some very basic questions about the network writing of these students:

What do the interactions look like? What topics do the students discuss, and how do they manage those topics?

In what different ways do the students use written language?

Is there evidence of development in the writing?

What We Learned

We found, first, that the transcripts were fascinating to read. As the brief conversation above illustrates, the students developed creative stories and various means (such as capital letters, punctuation, repeated letters) to express loudness, intonation, and emphasis. We also found that the more proficient students provided tremendous encouragement and support to the less proficient students. In the interaction above, Andrew leads Kelly into the collaborative creation of a story, reminding her of the activity and the topic they had agreed on. Although Kelly's writing is much simpler than Andrew's, she is still able to begin the story and contribute as Andrew keeps it going.

When we focused over time on the network writing of the less proficient students, we saw them move from reluctant to confident and developing writers. Our most extreme example was Pam, an eight-year-old prelingually deaf child of hearing parents from Vietnam, who had some knowledge of American Sign Language and only beginning proficiency in English; she was working below grade level in all academic areas when she started writing on the network. In early network conversations, she wrote very brief contributions which were difficult to understand, and she needed a lot of sign language support from her teacher, who worked with her constantly. The conversations themselves were very short, because Pam took so long to read her partner's messages and compose her own. The interaction shown here (Peyton & Mackinson, 1989) took about forty-five minutes to produce.[1]

Marcie: hello everybody

Pam: hi

Marcie: hello pam marcie here how are you?

Pam: i ma fine

Marcie: i am fine too

Pam: i ma go vilneae mother and father

Marcie: you will do what with mom and dad

Pam: yes we will go mom and dad

Marcie: to where?

Pam: i ma monmy me serae mare

Marcie: you type it wrong and the correct way is i made mistake and i change my mind

Pam: i go your home wite play

Marcie: do you mean you want to play my home today?

Pam: yes

Marcie: well, you cant not to go to my house because my mom is working

Pam: oh me not know

Marcie: oh i enjoy to talk with you!!bey for now ok

Pam: i not know tawt watw bey

Marcie: oh i am sorry i mean bye

Pam: OK I BYE TO YOU

Marcie: ok bye

After several months, Pam began to participate actively and confidently in these written conversations with less and less teacher help, and she even wrote collaborative stories like those that the more advanced students wrote. The following excerpt comes from a longer interaction during Pam's second year on the network. She is writing with her teacher.

Teacher: O.K. Let's talk about the christmas tree. Is that all right with you?

Pam: yes. you say that talk about jamie?

Teacher: I will listen to yours first. You said that your father had bought a christmas tree yesterday. Is that correct? How big is it?

Pam: i ask my father i want big christmas but father say that ok i am yeah!

Teacher: I know how you felt! Janie begged me for one last weekend. I told her to wait til this weekend. I was sick last weekend. That's why i couldn't go out and buy one.

Pam: ohhh but i thaotgu

Teacher: What did you mean? I don't understand.

Pam: i say i thaotgu you will get a chistmas today.

*Teacher:*Oh, not yet. This weekend Jamie, Dad and I will go buy one. We like the real ones because they give a nice smell. We do not like the artificial trees. Do you like them?

Pam: yes. but i like big chistmas.

Teacher: What will you put on your Christmas tree? Are you the only one who does the decorating? Do your parents or sister help you?

Pam: me and my sister and father and my mother not decorating because mother not like chisrtmas tree.

Teacher: I understand how your mother feels because I do not care about decorating our tree. Long time ago I did the decorating with my husband. But now with Jamie, I leave the decorating to her and her father.

Pam: ohh my sister like decorating but my sister not decorating because my sister not know how to decorating in the chismas.

Pam's writing still shows structural problems, but she is writing independently (with no sign language help) and confidently. She negotiates and delineates the topic with the teacher ("you say that talk about jamie?"), picks up on some of the teacher's language ("christmas," "decorating"), clarifies meanings ("i thaotgu [thought you] will get a chistmas [tree] today"), uses complex language constructions, and uses print means to show expression ("ohhh").

During their second year on the network, Pam and her classmates were paired in a new class with children who were even younger and less proficient in English. Pam became the "teacher" for them—leading them into conversation, simplifying her language so they could understand, asking questions, requesting clarification, and rephrasing her partner's attempts to communicate—as the older students had done with her.

When we learned about Shirley Brice Heath's work pairing at-risk students as tutors with younger children (Heath & Mangiola, 1991; Hoffman & Heath, 1986), we expanded the project even further. We paired a class of college preparatory students at Gallaudet, who were having trouble with written English themselves and had not yet passed the reading and writing tests which would allow them to take freshman English, with a class of Kendall students for weekly conversations on the network. Our primary goal was to develop the college students' reading and writing abilities and confidence with written English. The college students worked with the same child every week, took field notes during the conversations, carried on weekly written correspondence with JoAnn about their work, wrote a report at the end of the year to their child's teacher, and essentially became language experts for the elementary children.

Naturally, the children were ecstatic about the project, a chance to have the regular, affectionate attention of a deaf adult male (as it turned out, all of the college students were males). We were gratified to discover that the older students, who had experienced years of considerable frustration and failure with written English, were also enthusiastic. They were eager to meet with their child, and in their

reports and planning sessions, expressed considerable interest in and commitment to their work and the belief that they were having a positive influence. Over time, they began to function as a community of experts on the theme of the project, the language and educational development of their child. Increasingly, they acted as role models in their attitudes toward school and the use of English. In the network interactions, they were also language models: they asked questions so their child could participate, modeled the language their child tried to use, and modified their language so the child could understand and participate, as shown in the following interaction (Peyton, 1989) between Mike (who was profoundly deaf and had communicated in sign language for his entire life) and Lynn:

Mike: What do you want to wish [to be]?

Lynn: I will be a teac

Mike: Good. I understand. you will be a teacher. you want to become a teacher of what?

Lynn: yes you are right

Mike: What do you like to teach any subject? 1) Math 2) Science 3) English 4) History 5) Kids

Lynn: art

Mike: Now, I understand. you want to become a art teacher.

Off the network, the college students interacted in writing with other experts (JoAnn and the children's teacher) and pulled their experiences together in increasingly sophisticated narratives and essays (see Peyton, 1989, for a description of this project and the writing development of one of the college students).

The Nature of Our Collaboration

In a paper about dynamics of classroom research, Staton (1992) describes two different types of research involving teachers—cooperative and collaborative. In cooperative research, the teacher agrees to cooperate in a project designed by an outside researcher. The researcher has developed some theories or questions about classroom practices, implementation of a program or innovation, or student performance. The teacher agrees to let his or her classroom become a testing ground for those theories or questions and may set up special activities or experiments for the researcher to observe and study. The researcher observes practices, reviews materials, and interviews par-

ticipants, and when adequate data have been collected, goes off to write up the findings and report them, often to other researchers. The teacher sometimes, but not always, gets some feedback about the project or a copy of research reports.

In contrast, collaborative research grows out of a *mutual* search for understanding. The teacher as well as the researcher has a problem to solve, a theory to test out, questions to answer. Together, the teacher and the researcher define the problems, issues, or questions, observe and analyze processes and products, and disseminate results. Both of our computer networking projects were of the second type, collaborative efforts. Here we describe the key features, benefits, and possible pitfalls of that collaboration, as an inspiration and guide for others.

One important issue in collaboration is that of *ownership*. Who started the project? Whom does it "belong" to? Who feels responsible for its outcomes? Our projects never belonged to either one of us alone; our investment, commitment, and interest were always shared. JoAnn had issues she wanted to address with the elementary children, and Joy had been working on similar issues with the college students. Our separate projects became a joint project.

While we began working together out of common interest, the reason we continued to work together for two years and through two projects was *mutual respect*. We saw in each other qualities we appreciated in a teacher and a researcher. We each believed the other was very good at what she was doing, and that the other's expertise expanded our own. This is best described in our own voices:

JoAnn's view

One of the essential ingredients for success in this type of collaborative research is flexibility, for both the researcher and the teacher. Joy was not only a very experienced researcher who was also familiar with the ENFI Project (the name of the computer networking project at Gallaudet and Kendall), its ideals and goals, but she was interested in trying to fit in with my ideals for a population very different from the one she had been studying. She was able to "go with the flow" and allow the project to evolve. At no time did she impose her own values and interests on me. Rather, she listened and became interested in the ideas I presented to her. We built a common focus around those interests.

In addition, Joy provided the necessary organization and interpretation of the data we were collecting, from a perspective different from my own. Her background in linguistics, coupled with her teaching experience, fostered a sensitivity and awareness that many other researchers lack. These elements also kept

our sense of mutual respect strong and thriving, which contributed directly to the success and richness of our projects.

Throughout our collaboration, I sensed from Joy an authentic interest in the development of the individual students. This was not simply a research project for Joy, one that she could share with other researchers; she also really cared about the students—where they were going and how they were progressing. I had the sense that my students' achievements and successes were nearly as important to her as they were to me. She delighted in many of the same things I delighted in. She didn't view the students simply as subjects to be studied, but she brought a human element to the design and implementation of our research. I believe this to be a unique characteristic for a researcher. It not only fostered a comfortable working relationship, but I am convinced it kept the students feeling comfortable when, time and again, Joy turned up in our classroom or computer lab. She was, in fact, becoming a part of our family. The students welcomed her and never resented her presence.

Joy's view

When I came to JoAnn's first networking session, I was amazed at the richness of what I saw—a very good teacher, developing a new and innovative approach to literacy development, and having what looked to me like tremendous success. Written language was being used for purposeful communication about topics the students chose to write about and were interested in. The students were riveted to their computer screens, engaged with and serious about what they were doing. They were playing with words and ideas, competing linguistically, and "showing off their smarts" in writing. They argued and cajoled, played language games, and wrote creative stories. When more proficient writers wrote together, they expressed complex ideas and experimented with different styles and genres. Less proficient writers worked together to make themselves understood. When the two were paired with each other, the proficient writers provided language models that the less proficient writers picked up on and made use of. The literacy event was extended during subsequent sign language discussions of transcripts. The students reflected about and analyzed together what they had written on the network, developed an awareness of the ways they used written language, and talked about ways to improve future interactions.

After observing a couple of network sessions and subsequent transcript discussions, I asked JoAnn if she had read the literature about cross-age tutoring, or about working with students to analyze text and develop a metalanguage to talk about it, or about developing literate behaviors (not only literate

> skills). She said she hadn't; she was doing what seemed to make the most sense, given the network capabilities and her goals for her students.
>
> I felt the way every researcher feels when working with a good, experienced teacher who has developed exciting classroom practices—like I had just stumbled on a treasure, and all I needed to do was to mine it and try to make sense of the richness. This was both invigorating and a little overwhelming.

Another reason our collaboration continued was that *we each made unique contributions to the project.* This was evident in the background knowledge we each brought to it, our approaches to the research, and our dissemination of the results. JoAnn had years of experience working with this student population and a clear understanding of the issues related to English and literacy in the deaf community; Joy had very little. For example, Joy, with an English language orientation, would often speak of the students' "language development" on the network. JoAnn pointed out that we were looking at their "English language development," distinct from and no more important than their sign language development, which occurred in other contexts. At the same time, Joy's knowledge included familiarity with current research on language acquisition and literacy development and other researchers doing similar work. She brought years of experience studying students' interactive writing (first in dialogue journals and now on computer networks), identifying and organizing patterns in the writing, and interpreting what those patterns might mean.

While we worked together to generate research questions and to find answers, Joy did the detailed analysis and written discussion of the transcripts that most teachers, including JoAnn, simply do not have time to do. As Joy described patterns she was discovering, JoAnn became more sensitive to various aspects of the interactions and sometimes adjusted her work with the students accordingly. Since JoAnn worked closely with the students as they wrote, she was in an excellent position to identify interesting patterns as they occurred, patterns that Joy could analyze more closely later. For example, one day we were both in the lab while the students wrote on the network, JoAnn helping students and Joy walking around and observing. JoAnn commented several times about one of the network conversations, and at the end of the class said, "This has been a fascinating day. These transcripts need to be studied." In a later meeting, she pulled one of the conversations and pointed out the complex language collaboration occurring between the two students, with one guiding the other in much the same way a parent helps a child or a native speaker helps a

nonnative speaker of a language (described in detail in Peyton & Mackinson, 1989). Joy had not noticed that pattern before and had not expected to see it among children this young, but once JoAnn pointed it out, it became evident as well in the other interactions between students who were more or less proficient in English.

Since Gallaudet is a national center for deafness education and research and Kendall is a demonstration school, there are many visitors—teachers, researchers, and administrators. Usually one or the other of us was contacted to talk about computer networking with young children. We often made our presentations alone, but we sometimes presented jointly so as to provide our different perspectives on the research. Joy initiated and wrote proposals for presentations and publications outside Gallaudet and Kendall because she had more experience with national conferences and more contacts with people outside deaf education who were interested in our work. But JoAnn often decided how we would present our work, especially to teachers, because she had more experience working with teachers and more firsthand knowledge about whole language approaches to literacy development. While Joy had read extensively about whole language approaches and thought about how computer networking activities could fit in with them, JoAnn knew about them firsthand, from actually using them in class and from giving workshops to teachers of deaf students across the country. Joy could collect, analyze, and distill information, but JoAnn knew the kinds of information teachers wanted to know and how to present it to them.

Finally, our collaboration was successful because we *took time and had a commitment,* to the project and to each other. Time is both absolutely essential for any collaborative effort and very scarce (one reason to think carefully about whether collaboration is possible or desirable). We needed much more time than we had available, and we made time we didn't think we had. But we did need time—before class when we could get it, to talk about what was going to happen that day; after class, to talk about what had just happened and what might happen next; and in regular meetings, to review the whole project, plan a workshop or piece of writing, look at the students' writing, or just get to know each other. We were helped in our efforts to get together because Joy's office at Gallaudet was only a five-minute walk from Kendall, a luxury not available to many pairs of teachers and researchers. The second year of our work seemed like heaven in terms of time because JoAnn had a grant to work with other Kendall classes and teachers using computer networking and was not in the class-

room, another luxury not available to many teachers. Still, there were occasions when we needed each other's time and couldn't get it because of other demands.

What kept us trying, and talking, and meeting, and making time when we felt we really didn't have it, was that we were both committed not only to the project, but also to doing it together. With only one of us, there would be no project as we had designed it. JoAnn would certainly keep using the network with her elementary students, and Joy would continue to work with the college program, but *these* projects were ours, together.

Some Challenges to Collaboration

Like all relationships, collaborations between classroom teachers and outside researchers have their frustrations. An obvious one is the continual lack of adequate time. JoAnn often felt frustrated that time and energy limitations—so much a part of every classroom teacher's day—prevented her from devoting more time to the projects and accompanying writings we were undertaking. She felt uncomfortable with not being able to assist Joy more and with what often seemed a very uneven division of responsibility. Schedule changes at the school, totally beyond our control, disrupted the flow of our projects and forced us to change our agenda for the day or week or to modify our longer-range plans.

Possibly our biggest frustration was not being able to continue our projects when we were not yet ready to stop. We had planned to continue and expand our project linking Kendall elementary students with college students from Gallaudet for written conversations, and we had hoped to develop a semester-long curriculum for this program. We had also hoped to help train other teachers at Kendall and to help make networking a more central part of Kendall's whole language program. However, JoAnn gradually became more involved in Kendall's parent-infant program (working with parents of deaf babies) and is now one of the coordinators. She has very little time to work with the networking project and its expansion efforts. Joy has continued the project and established good working relationships with other Kendall teachers, but those relationships are all cooperative at this point. Most of the teachers are interested in developing their networking practice and in getting constructive feedback, but they do not have the time or the inclination to participate in the research itself. Joy's time on the project is now reduced considerably, and she is working

with several teachers rather than one, so she is not able to cultivate the kind of collaboration that we had. In short, collaboration does not always or automatically happen.

Conclusion

With the current emphasis on collaboration in educational research, all of us are in possible danger of distorting its qualities and overemphasizing its usefulness—of thinking we're collaborating when we're actually not, or of wishing we were collaborating when we don't need to. Collaboration occurs, and succeeds, when people have a genuine need and desire to collaborate, as Aaron Wildavsky, an avid but not perpetual collaborator, so candidly describes (Wildavsky, 1989). Both of us have been and will continue to be involved in individual projects, but circumstances will force much of our work to be cooperative rather than collaborative. Fortunately, for these two projects we needed to and were able to collaborate. We have both developed as teacher and researcher and have learned a tremendous amount about the value of collaboration. We encourage others to try it.

Notes

1. See Peyton and Mackinson (1989) for more information about Pam's development and more examples of her network writing.

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4 Looking Together: Collaboration as an Inquiry Process

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A brief dialogue between two of the students in Judy's combination third- and fourth-grade classroom introduces the children who people our research and the nature of our collaboration relationship. In Judy's classroom, children conversed with one another as they composed stories and letters, wrote in journals, worked on theme-based projects, and created magazines. As they talked and wrote, the students frequently invited each other to be in their stories. At times students felt proprietary about the possible use of their names and entitled to negotiate a desirable role for themselves in their peer's story.

> [Lionel leaned across the desk to talk to Michelle.]
>
> *Lionel:* Do you want to be in [my story]?
>
> *Michelle:* Yes.
>
> *Lionel:* The boys have to be detectives.
>
> *Michelle:* I want to be a spy.
>
> *Lionel:* Do you want to be a doctor? [He goes on to explain that as a doctor, every day she would go out and kill people.]
>
> *Michelle:* All right.

Lionel and Michelle were members of a group of students who chose to write detective stories together when given the opportunity to select

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The authors' names appear in alphabetical order because each person contributed, if not equally, at least simultaneously, to the chapter, literally sitting at the keyboard and writing side by side.

their own writing topics. Their invitations to participate in one another's stories were based on friendship, a common interest in a particular genre, and respect for each other as writers.

Our friendship, which began six years ago as we both entered a doctoral program in reading, writing, and literacy, led to the collaborative research relationship we will explore in this chapter. Our work together has included separate and joint research projects in Judy's combination third/fourth-grade classroom in an urban public school. After we had developed a longstanding relationship based on friendship and mutual trust, as well as professional collegiality and respect, Kathy asked Judy's permission to conduct research in her classroom. Subsequently, Judy invited Kathy to join her classroom in order to conduct her dissertation study. Like the children in Judy's classroom, we began by negotiating our own roles in the various research projects, continuing this process as we write today.

This chapter will explore the nuances of our collaboration as we developed ways to work together as teachers and researchers. In the description of our work we will emphasize the time we took to build a relationship which supported both our individual and collective work, the ways in which our perspectives merged while remaining distinctive, and our developing understandings about the possibilities of collaboration in qualitative classroom research.

The book *Joyful Noises* by Paul Fleischman (1988) contains pairs of poems written for two voices. When these poems are recited aloud in unison, they produce the effect of insects. As a result, both the sounds and the content of the poems elicit an interpretation of the insect. Alone, they are two separate poems, in which some words are the same, while others differ in both timing and meaning. Taken together, they are a single poem which cannot be read silently or alone.

These poems provide an apt metaphor for the collaboration between the two of us. We each have stories to tell about the years during which our research occurred; our stories are different, yet they overlap. Told alone, divorced from the other perspective, each of our stories or descriptions is diminished. When told together, they produce a collective perspective of the classroom. We have combined our stories of the study in collaborative presentations at conferences, in jointly written papers, and to a lesser extent, in our individual writing. In fact, it is impossible to pull our stories totally apart. They are so tightly woven together through our frequent conversations and shared points of view that when we tell the stories by ourselves, the inclusion of each other's point of view is inescapable. This chapter will explore

and describe for others the particular form of collaboration we have developed. We suggest that relationships like this one, between teachers and researchers, will add an important dimension to classroom research.

The Context of Our Work Together

Six years ago, when we both began graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania, we were delighted to meet each other. We had been told by a number of people to look for one another. We had a number of things in common: we had each decided to take time off from full-time classroom teaching because we had daughters born within a week of each other that previous June; we had both taught in open classrooms for a number of years; and we had both been members of the Philadelphia Teachers' Learning Cooperative. Our work with Patricia Carini, from the Prospect Center in North Bennington, Vermont, was another common thread that ran through our lives as teachers and learners. We each came to the university with some of the same questions. In fact, during our first semester, one of our professors and several students periodically confused the two of us, attributing Judy's ideas to Kathy and vice versa. What interests us both are our divergent perspectives on many questions and our different research directions, given our common histories.

In our initial research as graduate students, we began with completely different questions: Kathy interviewed adult literacy students and children about their perceptions of reading and writing, while Judy interviewed some nine- to twelve-year-old former students about their experiences with testing. As we each looked at the data from our initial interviews, we both found context to be a central issue. Kathy decided to try to contextualize and situate her questions about metacognitive awareness, and Judy asked children about their lives as students. Both formally and informally, we began to share our transcribed interviews, asking for comments and reactions. We began to discern overlapping themes in the responses we had gathered: when asked about testing, some children talked about reading and writing, and when asked about literacy, students described their experiences with tests. A complex pattern of the interactions within and between the school, the family and community, and society unfolded as we each listened to the students' stories. Therefore, our individual research, though different in specific focus, reinforced our common belief in the importance of listening to people's stories about their schooling. That

conviction comes in part from our approaches as teachers who build on students' strengths and who recognize and value the diversity we see in their approaches to learning.

For a course assignment at the end of the year, we chose to write a short paper together exploring our experiences as graduate students in light of our individual histories as readers and writers. We discovered that it was easy and enjoyable to collaborate in this way. Reflecting on what we had learned about ourselves as researchers that year, we noticed several themes: the importance of autonomy and holding fast to one's own perspective and questions, and at the same time the importance of collaboration and dialogue, seeing one's work through others' eyes. We also uncovered a theme that continues to surface in our current work—the struggle to find time for this particular form of collaboration, which centers on dialogue and reflection.

The following year, Judy returned to work as a full-time classroom teacher, while Kathy remained a graduate student. We continued our dialogue as we each became engaged in new research projects. While Judy collected and studied individual students' writing, Kathy began to explore the ways in which students form communities of readers and writers. In January, we decided to take a research course together so that we could combine these somewhat separate research projects that we had each begun. Aware that she was an outsider in Judy's classroom and that Judy was in the midst of her own research project begun in September, Kathy encouraged Judy to select the focus of the collaborative research. We decided to focus our research on the nature of the children's relationship to knowledge in this classroom. Though proposed by Judy, the particular emphasis emerged from a dialogue with Kathy and reflected our common interests.

During the spring semester, Kathy observed in Judy's classroom all day, one day per week, and daily for short periods of time (e.g., silent reading), concentrating on a few students whose writing Judy had been collecting and analyzing over the year. While Judy continued to focus on individual students' work over time, Kathy again became interested in studying communities of learners. As Judy shared with Kathy the children's writing from writing folders, literature logs, and various school assignments, Kathy became interested in the range and variation of writing and the networks or groups of writers in this classroom. While the foci of much of our research were overlapping, one point of divergence was Kathy's interest in probing how this "open classroom" continued to exist in a public school in the 1980s when they were increasingly under attack and marginalized in both

public and independent schools. For Judy, however, this issue was simply part of the tension involved in being a member of her school community and was not part of her own research agenda.

As we continued to work together, we decided that it would be exciting for Kathy to do her dissertation research in Judy's classroom during the following school year. Kathy's original research questions for her dissertation proposal focused on writing and community, continuing the themes we had pursued together the previous year. Kathy was intrigued with the various types of correspondence between students and teachers, as well as among students, and she began collecting examples of these, particularly the letters students wrote to their teachers to describe a fight or a social or academic concern. In September 1988, Kathy began ethnographic research in Judy's classroom, research that resulted in her dissertation. Kathy chose research questions that were relevant to each of us in our collective long-term work as teachers and researchers. Kathy saw Judy's classroom not as a place to try out already formed ideas, but rather, as a place where she could plunge into a relatively new situation from which to further develop her notions about literacy and community.

The Research Setting

Judy's classroom is an urban public, third/fourth-grade, team-taught classroom with about fifty-six students (the number changes constantly) and two teachers. The classroom is one of three "open" classrooms in a school that is small (275 students) by public school standards. This school, which we will refer to as Baring School, was built in the 1960s as a result of the lobbying efforts of an ethnically and racially diverse group of mainly middle-class community activists. The group wanted a racially mixed, progressive urban school for their children (Anderson, 1990).

The school was built on the site of a historic home. Parents in the community, pushing children in strollers, marched around three large trees on the grounds to keep them from being leveled by bulldozers. As a result, Baring School is more aesthetically pleasing than most urban public schools; the playground is dotted with these trees and the front of the school has mosaics designed by parents. The school's appearance reflects a history of parent and community involvement in the school. Some teachers in the school, including Judy, have always been members of this community. When open classrooms were introduced in this country, there was support in the local community across

race and class lines for this type of classroom as an alternative in Baring School. As open classrooms are becoming increasingly marginalized in this country, this particular classroom represents one of a handful of this type extant in this school district.

Judy began team teaching with Kathy five years prior to our research in their classroom. They had commenced teaching together one year after Judy transferred to Baring School to fill an open classroom teaching position. During their first year of team teaching, there was a lot of support and excitement generated by the students and parents for their larger, open classroom composed of two grades of students. Much of the language learning in this classroom centers on thematic units or projects which are introduced a few times during the year. Students are given a set of both very specific and open-ended tasks to complete, primarily during a language arts period. These activities invariably integrate both reading and writing and involve a steady stream of talk, as students teach and learn from each other. During these times, the students often choose where they want to sit. Every day there is a twenty-minute silent reading time. A few afternoons each week there is an activity referred to as "Project Time," during which students choose from a range of activities that may include reading and writing.

The Research Process

During the third year of our work together, our research focused on Kathy's dissertation research. In preparation for Kathy's meeting to ask permission to visit the classroom regularly for this year-long project, Judy described the research proposal to the new principal. When Kathy met with him, his immediate response was that it was fine as long as the classroom teachers agreed to the project. This easy access to the classroom was primarily a result of the relationship Kathy and Judy had built over the previous years.

Kathy's research questions focused on the meaning of writing as a social practice in the classroom. In order to answer these questions, she examined the meanings of collaboration between and among students and teachers. She focused on the co-construction of the writing curriculum by students and teachers through the processes of initiation, negotiation, and appropriation, and on the social networks, formed by both teachers and students, that supported the writing in this classroom.

After spending every day as a participant-observer for the first three weeks of school, Kathy spent three and later two days per week in the classroom. She nearly always remained the entire day so that she could capture the range of writing and relationships that occurred throughout the day. Kathy was introduced to the students on the first day of school as "Teacher Kathy" (a title that paralleled those of the other teachers in the classroom), and the students were told they could go to her for help. Although her primary role in the classroom was that of an observer, she frequently assisted students with a range of tasks.

While Judy and Kathy talked each day that Kathy was in the classroom and frequently on the days in between, as the project progressed, it became clear that Judy would need to take a less central role in the research project. She continued to collect students' work for Kathy, note significant events, and fill in the picture for Kathy when Kathy was absent from the classroom. Both the nature of her teaching and her involvement as a professional in the larger educational community dictated that Judy support rather than participate equally in the research project. At the end of a typically busy school day, Judy found herself on the telephone with parents and guardians, her student teacher, or writing project colleagues, rather than keeping field notes.

What We Have Learned

An examination of our research process further illustrates the nuances of our collaboration as teachers and researchers in this classroom. The different positions we each occupied in the classroom are illustrated most vividly by the ways we were able to actually hear and see different aspects of the same event as illustrated in examples 1 and 2. We have discovered a more complete picture when we put together the two perspectives.

Example 1: The "S" Encyclopedia

One afternoon during a silent reading time, Kathy took copious notes on bustling activity surrounding the encyclopedias. Students were going back and forth, exchanging encyclopedias and whispering excitedly together. They were searching for the "s" encyclopedia most intently. Judy was aware of the intense activity and went over to the table, slightly annoyed, to remind them that it was a silent reading time. Kathy, who was not sitting close enough to hear the conversation, noted the interactions and the excitement but was unable to figure out the content of

their talk. At the end of the period, as Judy walked by Kathy to flick the lights, she whispered to Kathy, "'S' stands for sex."

Example 2: Anwar

Another day in February, Kathy was in the library during an independent work time and wrote a focused observation on Anwar, whose writing Judy had been collecting throughout the year. We were both aware that Anwar asked countless questions of teachers. After reading the notes, Kathy noticed that Anwar had initiated most of his interactions with the librarian, and so she decided to do a discourse analysis of the talk. Both she and Judy were interested to find the number of times he initiated talk with a teacher, reversing the usual pattern of teacher-student talk. This helped Judy to see more clearly how this student was uniquely taking charge of his own learning in multiple contexts.

In the first example, describing the "S" encyclopedia incident, Judy was able to contribute information to Kathy's field notes that both illuminated and explained the event. As a relative outsider to the classroom, Kathy had been unable to get close enough to grasp the complete picture. Without the explanatory conversation with Judy, Kathy's observation would have remained both incomplete and less interesting.

In contrast, the second example suggests there were moments when Kathy's position as an outside observer gave her an advantage. Because she was not engaged in the teaching and learning that was the immediate task of the classroom, she could collect, albeit from a distance, more details than she could have possibly remembered had she been the teacher at the center of the action.

Our close study of Anwar stands as an example of our divergent, yet complementary, research purposes and directions. Judy has continued to use our observations of Anwar and his written work as a way to explore with other teachers a variety of issues, including the interaction between teacher assignments and growth in student writing. For Kathy, the close analysis described in example 2 helped her to become more deeply involved in Judy's classroom and to understand its content and structure more quickly than she would have without close, in-depth analysis of this kind. But although the research each of us does is grounded in close observation of students and their work, Judy's major focus is on individual students, whereas Kathy's major focus is on the interactions between and among teachers and pairs or small groups of students.

We also see that what each of us observes leads to different actions. Stated most baldly, when Judy notices a particular literacy event, she is likely to turn it into an opportunity for teaching and learning at the moment, while Kathy writes it down for later use.

Example 3 captures a literacy event that was both pivotal and exciting for each of us. It describes a literacy event that was emblematic of the possibilities for writing in this classroom.

Example 3: The Jolly Postman

One morning Judy read to the class a recent children's book entitled *The Jolly Postman* that her six-year-old son received as a gift. The book has numerous pockets, each of which contains a clever letter to or from a different storybook character (Cinderella, Goldilocks, etc.). The students were intrigued by the book, and a list was started so that they could take turns reading the book on their own during a silent reading period. About a week later, a student, Nekiya, came to school with her own version of *The Jolly Postman* that she had written at home, complete with pockets and letters. Judy read Nekiya's book during the morning sharing time. Responding to interest expressed by other students, Judy asked Nekiya to show her classmates how to make Jolly Postman books during an afternoon project time. For the next month, numerous and various versions of this book were written in school and at home.

We each responded to this literacy event in different ways. Judy saw the Jolly Postman stories as part of her long-term, ongoing project of encouraging letter writing in her classroom for multiple purposes. Kathy, who had been following letter writing as a central category of writing in this classroom, saw this incident both as an example of a new form of the letter-writing genre and as an example of a writing network or group of students who consistently wrote together over time. Both the form of writing and its social context were initiated primarily by the students themselves within a framework established by the teachers. On the one hand, Kathy's categorization of the various forms of writing in the classroom related to her participation in academic discourse and did not change the material conditions of the classroom. On the other hand, by giving Judy a picture of her classroom that included a description of the range and variation of both the types of writing and the relationships around writing, Kathy was adding to the way Judy thinks about literacy in the classroom, the role of student-initiated writing and networks, and the growth of students as individual readers and writers. As Kathy worked on her dissertation, she became increasingly aware that her understanding of the

students' collaboration around writing was necessarily shaped by her own collaborative relationship with Judy and the collaborative research methods we had jointly developed.

An extended vignette of one student in Judy's class illustrates these same points (see also Schultz, 1991). While both Judy and Kathy were intrigued by Roderick as a student and a writer from the beginning of the year, our perspectives on him differed slightly, as is evident in the following description:

> Roderick was a tall, handsome, ten-year-old fourth-grade African American student. An unusually talented artist who often was busy constructing and drawing imaginary worlds, Roderick had a caustic sense of humor which was evident in his writing. He was considered "defiant" by his teachers and occasionally got into fights with his peers. His numerous interests included soccer, comic books, patterns, and design. He enjoyed puns and wordplays, and collected *Mad* magazines, which he generously shared with others.
>
> At the beginning of the school year, Judy and Roderick knew each other well. With the support of his mother, Roderick had spent two years in third grade in this same classroom in order to strengthen his academic skills. While he had struggled initially with reading, writing, and math, by the end of his second year in third grade, Roderick had made visible signs of progress in both reading and math. As he began fourth grade, the final year of elementary school, Judy was concerned about Roderick's reluctance to move from drawing to writing. She knew that he would need to be able to write short paragraphs, as a minimum, in order to handle the demands of the middle school curriculum the following year.
>
> Kathy immediately noticed Roderick when she entered the classroom scene. She was intrigued by his facility with words and drawing, which seemed to attract a constant audience of peers around his desk. Had she not been a teacher herself and had she not had an ongoing dialogue with Judy grounded in the specifics of daily teaching, Kathy could have easily formed any of a number of mistaken notions about Roderick as a writer in this classroom. For instance, she might have interpreted Judy's insistence during a writing period that he stop drawing and write at least half a page as antithetical to Judy's professed views of teaching based on valuing children's strengths and interests. Instead, Kathy put Judy's comments into the context of Judy's specific knowledge of Roderick's needs as a learner and her own teacher knowledge of what children need to be able to accomplish in order to succeed in school.

While our perspectives were interwoven, our specific foci tended to be along separate but parallel paths. For instance, the liter-

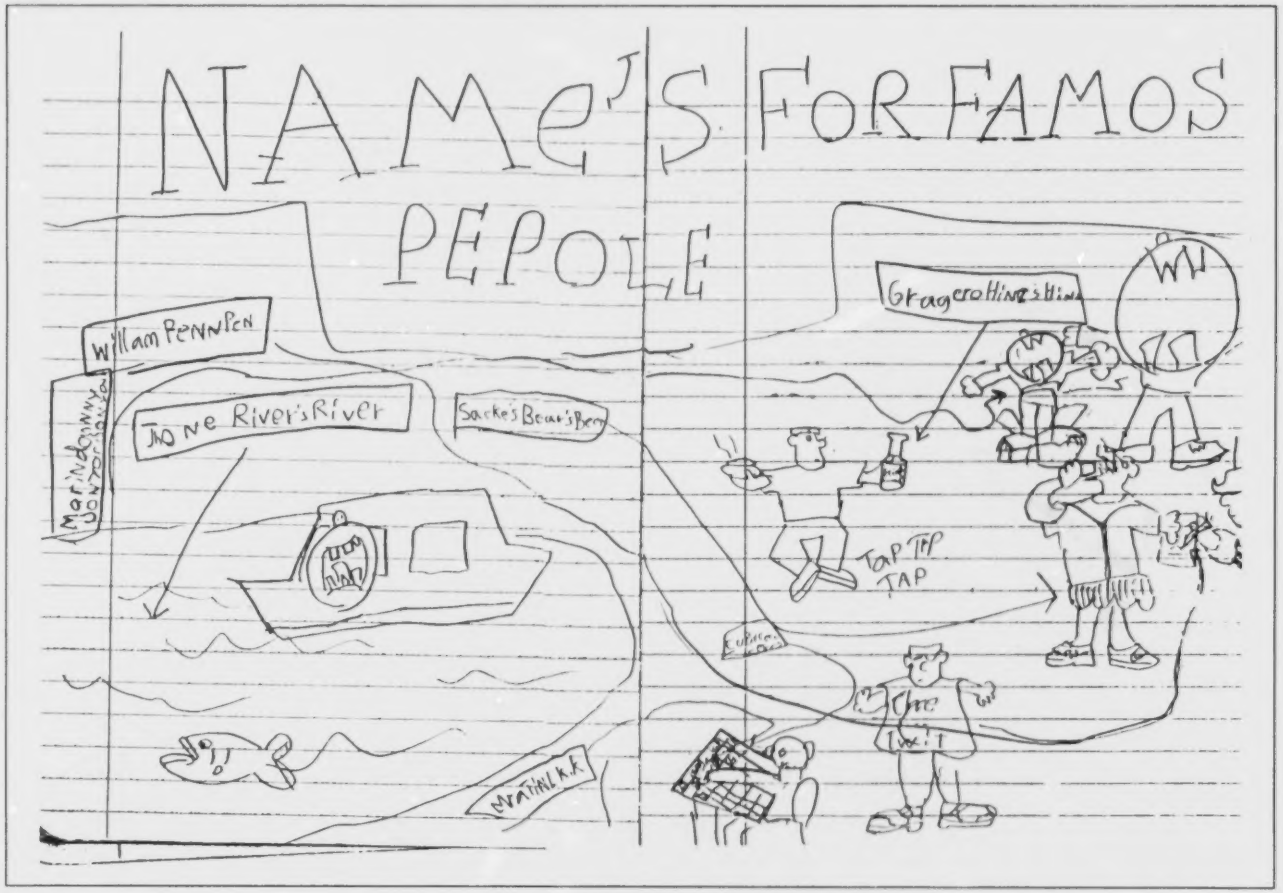
acy event that stood out for Judy as pivotal to Roderick's growth as a writer occurred mid-year when, in response to a literature group assignment, Roderick, on his own, used a list to organize his thoughts in order to write about his childhood. At this point in the year, he had developed list making as a strategy to both categorize and sequence his thoughts before writing. Additionally, he was able to complete this project without the active support and intervention of a teacher. Judy marked this event as critical in reaching the goals she had for Roderick, of both working independently and being able to write an extended piece of prose assigned by the teacher.

For Kathy, however, Roderick's salient features were different. Her early observations led her to focus on a magazine called *Rad*, which Roderick had created with his friends, and to focus on the various relationships he had established with his collaborators. She began collecting, from the students themselves, the history of the magazine and the folk terms associated with it. She noticed the amount of writing hidden among the drawings which filled the journal that Roderick openly shared with all members of the class. Roderick's playfulness in both drawing and writing was also evident.

Figure 1 shows a page from one of Roderick's *Rad* magazines. It was drawn quickly in pencil on notebook paper in the midst of a stream of talk with surrounding students. What immediately stood out to both of us in this writing was its playfulness. While at first difficult to "read," pages from the *Rad* magazine contained many of the elements that Judy looked for in academic writing, such as sequencing of ideas, an awareness and use of correct mechanics, and an understanding of audience. The writing illustrated both that he had developed his own voice and that he was able to understand and then transform the style of *Mad* magazine, making it his own. We found that as with *Mad* magazine, we had to read *Rad* carefully and think together to understand the wordplays and humor in this writing. In addition, through the writing of elaborate adventure stories in the *Rad* magazine, Roderick learned to write sustained pieces of prose for an audience of his peers. By the end of the year, Judy felt that Roderick had successfully crossed over several hurdles in his writing, and she felt that he was at least adequately prepared for his next year of schooling. At the same time, she was painfully aware that his particular style, pace, and cynicism would present new obstacles for his success in a new setting.

Judy's classroom practice is to work closely with students in revising selected pieces of teacher-assigned writing, while allowing students to make their own decisions about the forms and processes

Figure 1. A page from one of Roderick's *Rad* magazines.



that they use in the writing, such as this magazine writing. This opportunity to take a closer look with Kathy at the *Rad* magazine writing provided evidence to support Judy's theory that students learn and practice many literacy skills both in writing that is initiated by them and in pieces written primarily for their peers. Conscious of the need to maintain distance from some of the students' writing so that the students can write for their own purposes and audiences, Judy recognized that she will not always see all that is written during the school year. By gathering and looking closely at students' work together, Judy and Kathy each added to the other's partial vision.

Reflections on Collaboration and Collaborative Research

We chose the phrase "looking together" for our title because it has a slightly different meaning than "collaboration." The word "collaboration" holds both the notion of working with the enemy and working with an equal partner, with a common purpose and toward a common goal. "Looking together" is a more apt description of our work because we bring both multiple perspectives and multiple purposes to our research. While these perspectives and purposes overlap in many instances, their differences, when they occur, are not viewed as hindrances to our inquiry processes.

We find it intriguing, though, that while Kathy often plunges in and begins to do research while she is still in the process of formulating her own questions, Judy tends to approach her research from the periphery. Rather than plunging in, she walks around the edges of a problem to obtain different perspectives which help her form questions. Having spent ten years as part of a teacher's collaborative that conducted weekly oral inquiry processes as a form of research, Judy finds herself valuing teachers' talk as an important form of research. We see our own approaches to research as building on our strengths as learners and observers of the world.

We have recently realized that while we are both interested and involved in our joint research, our purposes for research are different. Each of us wants to have a dialogue with the larger educational community about literacy and learning in urban schools, but our current stances and responsibilities are different. This difference is reflected in our distinct research purposes and the use we make of our research. As a practicing teacher, Judy finds that when her responsibilities for the daily life of the classroom are overwhelming, her position as a researcher recedes. Meeting regularly with other teachers, she uses the

modes of inquiry in which she participated prior to graduate school (see, for example, Carini, 1986), primarily oral modes, to inform her responses to students, to develop classroom themes, and to study students' writing (Buchanan, 1993). In addition, her time line for research is different from Kathy's, and she has continued to present and analyze in a variety of ways the observations and writing she collected from Anwar during 1987 and 1988, adding a detailed study of a second student in 1991. Kathy has been conducting research in a setting which is very different from the one in which she taught. Her current questions are shaped by the discourse in the academic world, her own teacher knowledge, and her interest in describing the possibilities that currently exist in urban public schools for teaching and learning while advocating for change (Schultz, 1991).

As we continue to look together, what we see informs each of our purposes and questions. We wonder whether "collaboration" is too neat a word for the shifting partnership we have undertaken. In one sense, it remains a collaboration because we are constantly learning from each other, attempting to fill in each other's vision. However, the term "equality," which is implicit in one sense of the word "collaboration," does not capture the essence of our partnership. It is not that one of us has a hidden agenda or that either of us feels she has more knowledge than the other. Rather, our different roles in the classroom by definition make Judy vulnerable in a way Kathy will never be. Although there is mutual trust and respect, the bottom line is that the topic of our research is Judy's teaching. The looking we do together includes focused studies of single pieces of writing and expansive discussions of issues facing teachers and children in urban classrooms. It involves a variety of roles and stances for each of us. We realize we each come to our research with a partial vision. By continuing our dialogue, we hope to widen our vision as our conversations inform both how we look and what we see.

Our research together has deepened our understanding of collaboration and ways of looking together. Collaboration, in contrast to cooperation, implies a relationship over time. Additionally, the concept of collaboration suggests the importance of issues of power and control. There is an implicit assumption that in collaboration, power is shared equally. Even people who collaborate with an enemy occupying their home territory gain power and a more equal status through their collaboration. However, we no longer hold as our ideal the notion that each person's contributions will always be of an equal amount and of the same order in a collaborative relationship. The foundation

of our collaboration rests on the trust and respect we have for each other as teachers and researchers—something we developed before we began our work together. Our strong beliefs that each person has only a partial vision has allowed us to maintain a dialogue from our different stances so that there is a real exchange of ideas. We realize that there have been very few times when we've actually had to negotiate power within our relationship, in part because of our shared understanding of the political nature of being a teacher within a school community and a researcher within a university.

We are constantly aware of the fact that the wider world places a higher value on university research than on classroom teaching. What makes it possible for Judy to continue to agree to Kathy's research in her classroom is that the research is theirs, not Kathy's alone. For instance, in writing her dissertation, Kathy did not simply acknowledge Judy as a contributor in a footnote, subsuming Judy's voice within her own. Rather, hoping to create a new model for a single author writing about collaborative research, Kathy included Judy's analysis in Judy's own voice. Similarly, when Judy presents students' writing to groups of teachers, she includes Kathy's observations and retains Kathy's voice.

We recognize that the research methods we are describing will never become the dominant research paradigm. There are very few people with whom each of us can imagine having this kind of collaborative relationship. Ultimately, we have pursued it because we have trusted that it will engender a deeper understanding for both of us about literacy and learning in urban schools. We each began collaborative work long ago, early in our teaching careers and as members of the Philadelphia Teachers' Learning Cooperative. We sometimes feel inundated by the number of collaborations in which we find ourselves. We can't look at our own collaborative relationship without acknowledging the other collaborations it is nested within, each of which makes its own demands for our time. The dilemma of how to remain a conscientious classroom teacher, using classroom-based research to deepen one's understanding of practice and working on collaborative research projects, while being a participant in the larger educational community, remains unsolved. Unsolved, too, is the question of how a university-based researcher who retains a teacher's perspective can maintain this perspective over time. We do not believe that any one of these teaching and research activities should be abandoned. However, it is clear that, in the long run, we will both have to make choices that will make our lives easier and narrow our vision.

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5 Learning and Teaching Together

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Fair Oaks School, Redwood City, California

Lucinda Pease-Alvarez
University of California at Santa Cruz

Lisa, April 12, 1987

Today I asked Leanore did she like me. She said yes. And I asked her do she get bored with me sometime. She said sometime but not all the time. I told Leanore if she wanted a new tutor. She said no and I said if you want to pick someone to read to you. I felt like crying but I didn't. And then she told me that she loves me. And I told her that I felt like choking her sometimes and Leanore said no you don't mean that and I don't. And I told her I love you. And I kissed her on the cheek.

The above entry from ten-year-old Lisa's field notebook encapsulates the conflicting sentiments of many young tutors who have been part of cross-age tutoring in Leslie Mangiola's fifth-grade classroom. Tutors like Lisa have come face to face with heartache and joy as they have tried to make learning and teaching meaningful for their kindergarten tutees. To their credit, they have called upon a range of resources when considering new strategies to use during tutoring. Most notable has been their reliance on one another to work through the problems they encountered as they worked with their tutees. Like our student tutors, we, too, relied on one another as we reflected upon our experiences in the classroom. In this chapter, we describe the collaboration and insights that emerged from our experiences with cross-age tutoring.

Setting the Stage for Tutoring

In 1985, under the direction of Shirley Brice Heath and with the permission of the staff at Fair Oaks School, Cindy Pease-Alvarez, Olga Vasquez, and Marge Martus began a cross-age tutoring project involving fifth graders and kindergartners. Underlying our commitment to

this project was the understanding that language and literacy represent a set of cultural practices learned through the "process of socialization, or induction into a community of [language and] literacy practicers" (Resnick, 1990, p. 171). Thus, the everyday activities that surround and involve learners provide an important and meaningful context for learning language and literacy which, we feel, should be recognized in schools. As Heath (1986) and others have argued, this view contrasts markedly with traditional approaches to schooling which have tended to ignore the everyday experiences of children and have favored organizing instruction around a sequence of isolated skills. By building upon an activity common to most children living in the community that surrounds Fair Oaks School, we hoped to offer an alternative to this conventional approach.

In the Mexican immigrant community surrounding Fair Oaks School, children play an important role in the socialization of other children. Older children spend many hours of the day caring for younger family members. In some single-parent households, children even take on the responsibilities of a missing parent. And because parents often speak less English than their older children, it is not uncommon for these children to take on parental responsibilities that require the use of English (e.g., conferring with monolingual English-speaking pediatricians and teachers about a younger sibling). From our perspective, tutoring represented a way of building upon the everyday interactions and roles that characterize the relationship older children have with their younger siblings or family members. By incorporating tutoring into the academic lives of students, we felt that we would be capitalizing on an authentic and community-based context for learning language and literacy. Thus, tutors and tutees who work together while reading and writing participate in a familiar socialization activity.

In many ways, Fair Oaks School, with its whole language philosophy, represented the ideal place to implement a cross-age tutoring program grounded in the sociocultural view of language and literacy development that we advocated. Once strong proponents of skills-based approaches to curriculum and instruction, teachers at Fair Oaks now feel that language is best developed in classrooms that allow for authentic and purposeful uses of written and oral language. Consequently, the students in these classrooms read and write across the curriculum for a wide range of purposes. They experience the many forms and functions of literacy through reading and writing personal narratives, fiction, poetry, journal entries, letters, and reports.

Whole language teachers at Fair Oaks also understand that an interactive environment enhances their students' literacy development. Consequently, they strive to make their classrooms places where students have a variety of opportunities to engage in conversation that is related to learning and literacy. They know that these opportunities do not arise in classrooms where teachers spend the majority of the day lecturing and firing questions at large groups of students. They understand that there are times when teachers should keep quiet and, more important, times when they should listen and provide students with opportunities to interact with one another.

The First Year

The initial tutoring experience, which came to be known as the Stanford Interactive Reading and Writing Project, involved twelve Mexican-origin fifth-grade girls (the tutors), more than twenty Spanish-speaking first-grade boys and girls (the tutees), and the four Stanford participants (i.e., Heath, Martus, Pease-Alvarez, and Vasquez) who supervised the project and trained the tutors. Both older and younger children were excused from their regular classes to work together twice a week in a separate classroom. The girls were selected because they were not doing well in school and were infrequent and reluctant participants in regular class activities. The criteria used to select first-grade tutees varied. In most cases, first-grade teachers chose children they felt had seldom been read to outside of school.

During the two-week preparation period that preceded tutoring, the Stanford participants read to small groups of the fifth-grade girls. The girls were prompted to reflect on these book-reading events afterward by watching themselves on video playbacks and identifying the analytic strategies they used that might be helpful in talking about text with young children (e.g., relating personal experiences to text, offering explanations about text, etc.). After a few weeks, they began tutoring the younger children twice a week for forty-five minutes. Reading aloud to first and second graders, usually in Spanish, became the major activity of each tutoring session. Before returning to their own classrooms, the tutors wrote about their tutoring experiences in their field notebooks. They drew upon their field note entries when writing bimonthly progress reports to their tutees' teachers.

At the end of the year, the school staff suggested that cross-age tutoring be incorporated into the regular curriculum by involving

entire classrooms of children in this activity. Fortunately, Shirley Brice Heath secured the funds for developing and implementing a cross-age tutoring program that paired Leslie Mangiola's fifth graders with Etty Korngold's kindergartners and, during the subsequent year, with Peggy Smullin's first graders.

The Second Year

We began the second year by having Cindy Pease-Alvarez, a graduate student at Stanford and one of the four Stanford participants, work with Leslie Mangiola and her fifth-grade class. Initially, Cindy's role was to help Leslie implement and develop cross-age tutoring and to investigate the interactions between tutors and tutees. During the summer, Cindy and Leslie got together to plan the program. After carefully reconsidering the pull-out experience of the previous year, we decided to make certain modifications. For example, we extended the preparation period for student tutors from two weeks to a month. During that time, we had tutors view videotaped tutoring sessions recorded during the previous year, observe teachers working with kindergarten-age students, identify the ways of talking about and using literacy that were characteristic of tutoring and teaching, engage in a variety of collaborative reading and writing activities, and read hundreds of children's books. In addition, we decided to include a time when students would be able to discuss their field notes as a group, thereby providing the authentic audience that would contribute to a more reflective stance toward tutoring.

Once the school year began, Cindy moved into the role of co-teacher for Leslie's class. Because Cindy was intrigued with Leslie's commitment to whole language and the different kinds of classroom activities that were compatible with whole language, she wanted to learn more. Thus, with Leslie's approval, she became a participant in many of the literacy events that were part of regular classroom life. Like other teachers at Fair Oaks School, Cindy conferred with children during writers' workshop and facilitated book discussion sessions as well as other discussions including exchanges that focused on tutoring itself. Once tutoring started, she also investigated what went on during tutoring sessions and, with Shirley Brice Heath's help, generated the following set of research questions, which were intended to guide her data collection efforts during the school year:

> What kind of strategies do tutors rely on while working with tutees? Does tutoring represent an occasion when tutors are

> engaged in so-called higher-order cognitive activity? What is the nature of that activity?
>
> What is the nature of the tutor/tutee relationship? What roles do tutors take on? Who is generally in control of the interaction? How does the relationship evolve over time?
>
> Does tutoring contribute to tutors' views about literacy and literacy development? What are tutors' views of literacy and literacy development?

Cindy addressed these questions by videotaping pairs of tutors and tutees as they engaged in different tutoring activities, by keeping field notes on tutoring activities, and by collecting entries from the students' field notebooks. Eventually, this body of data also became the focus of our discussion with one another as we worked together to improve upon learning and teaching in Leslie's classroom.

Initially, Leslie was not involved in the research activities that accompanied tutoring. In fact, she had little interest in forging a collaborative research relationship when she first began this project with Cindy. For Leslie, the attraction of working with Cindy was to have a colleague who shared in teaching, and Leslie was happy to have the opportunity to work with another adult who was interested in her students and proficient in their language. However, as the year progressed, Leslie began to collaborate with Cindy and Shirley Brice Heath during bimonthly sessions when they, along with other Fair Oaks teachers, would spend time viewing videotapes of tutoring sessions. During these sessions, she would share her perspectives about students' interactions and relationships with one another.

Different kinds of collaboration characterized our experience with cross-age tutoring. Perhaps the most rewarding, from our perspective, was the collaboration between colleagues seeking to improve teaching and learning in their classroom. While we felt that this kind of collaboration was part of our relationship from the very beginning, we took longer to identify and encourage it in our students. In the following sections, we will describe the nature of this collaboration and how it led to insights about teaching and learning for the different members of our classroom community.

Our Collaboration

When measured against the goals and procedures of some "ideal" we have for collaborative research, the research collaboration relating to Cindy's research questions fell short. We did not collaborate at every level of this research endeavor (i.e., generation of research questions,

data collection, analysis and interpretation of data, etc.). Moreover, this was never our intention. Leslie's contributions to Cindy and Heath's research project consisted of collecting some data (i.e., taking some observational notes during tutoring) and helping to generate descriptive themes that pertained to initial research questions, particularly those focusing on the nature of the tutor-tutee relationship. And yet, in our day-to-day teaching experience, there was another kind of research going on for us, even though we may not have initially recognized or labeled it as "research." This was *action research,* and it was most definitely collaborative. We felt fulfilled as co-teachers who regularly reflected on classroom experiences while figuring out ways to improve upon instructional practice. Once tutoring started, we shared our observations with one another as often as possible, and met with Shirley Brice Heath and occasionally on our own to view videotaped segments of tutoring exchanges. Although these opportunities to reflect jointly on what went on in the classroom helped Cindy as she worked through the research questions that guided her initial research efforts, they also represented occasions when we reconsidered how learning and teaching were accomplished in Leslie's classroom. We often acted upon our observations by making changes. For example, we extended and restructured the discussion time that followed tutoring, included the tutees' teachers (Etty Korngold and later Peggy Smullin) in these discussions, and figured out ways to encourage tutors and tutees to write with and to one another. Gradually, our discussions focused on what occurred during other times of the school day. For example, we both began experimenting with literature study, an approach to small-group discussion about children's literature that had been introduced to the teachers at Fair Oaks school by Carole Edelsky of Arizona State University and Karen Smith, a talented classroom teacher (now associate executive director of NCTE). During the course of the school year, we audiotaped literature study sessions, shared these recordings with one another and other Fair Oaks teachers, and eventually developed a set of maxims which we relied on while working with children during literature study sessions.[1]

Thus, with time, our relationship furthered the goals of action research. Instead of addressing a series of research questions or concerns driven by someone else's frame of reference, we used our classroom-based experiences and data to help us figure out ways to enhance the way learning and teaching were accomplished in Leslie's classroom. On many occasions, we spent time articulating and rearticulating our own educational philosophies, which were being

reshaped by classroom events, our professional development experiences, and our discussions with other educators.

Over the course of the last few years, we have had to grapple with a number of obstacles to collaboration. We learned that there are times when collaboration is impossible. For example, Cindy was not successful in fostering a similar relationship with other teachers. She found that the problem posing and brainstorming that characterized her relationship with Leslie were impossible in classrooms where teachers expected her to implement tutoring as a prepackaged program or instructional activity. In other cases, Cindy, who was already a regular participant in Leslie's classroom, could not find the time to sustain an ongoing working relationship with other teachers without cutting down on the time she spent in Leslie's class. There were even occasions when Cindy and Leslie could not find the time for in-depth reflection about events that had taken place in Leslie's classroom. One way they addressed this problem was to share their own observations and concerns during the large-group discussion sessions between students and teachers that followed tutoring.

Collaboration among Children

The collegial relationship that we shared was also mirrored in our relationships with the tutors and in the tutors' relationships with one another. The most interesting collaborations centered on working through tutoring problems. Like Leslie and Cindy, tutors also collaborated with one another as they worked through the problems that arose during tutoring. Often, tutors would work together to resolve similar kinds of dilemmas during the discussion periods that followed tutoring. The following excerpt represents the kind of problem posing and problem solving that went on during one of these discussions:

> *Ana:* Pedro was a brat. He didn't want me to read to him . . . All he did was hear himself talk into a tape recorder . . . Pedro said, "Why are you doing this?" And I said, "I'm teaching you guys to read and write."
>
> *Linda:* Maybe you could ask him why he doesn't want you to read to him. Is he bored?
>
> *Ana:* Yeah.
>
> *Leslie:* What would you do if you had a tutee . . .
>
> *Linda:* [Interrupts Leslie] Ask him what kind of things they like. Tell him what it's like when they grow up and they don't know what it's like to read or write.

Leslie: What do you do with a kid that's bored?

Iris: Uhm, get both your arms [makes hugging gesture].

Sara: Let him read to her 'cause sometimes some of the big kids they don't let their tutee read and that's what they want.

Leslie: You say he likes to color?

Mary: Let him color and tell you what the picture is about.

Sara: Or write down something.

Mario: Have him tell you a story about the pictures.

Iris: Or he could write words under it.

Discussions like this provided students with frameworks for self-reflection. Oftentimes, students who shared their experiences with others came up with their own solutions and insights. At one point, Ana, the tutor who was experiencing difficulties in the preceding exchange, was seriously considering abandoning her tutee, Pedro. After much deliberation, she finally reached her own solution. She decided to continue to work with Pedro because she was afraid that he would feel hurt if she were to abandon him. For the rest of the year, tutoring Pedro was not easy. Ana frequently brought up tutoring problems with the rest of the group. But she persevered. At first, she relied on problem-solving sessions with her classmates and teachers to give her direction. As the year progressed, however, she developed tutoring strategies of her own.

For other tutors, this kind of deliberative self-reflection was evident in their writing. Field note entries, end-of-the-year reports, and letters to the tutees' teachers became occasions when students posed and worked through problems. In the following field note entries, Rene set forth the difficulties she was having with her tutee, Ken.

Rene, 11/11/87

Ken was kinda wild today. He didn't want to come to the class or me reading to him. I hope he's not like this all year. If he is I'm changing. I don't really want to but if he's like that I'm gona have too. Well I'll stay with him a littl while. If hes good ill stay with him. But I don't want it to be like this again.

Rene, 11/12/87

Today was kind a ok. He always hides from me when I go and pick him up and sometimes I dont like it whan that happens. maybe I should tell him that tommro—and I will—I hope he stops that when I tell him tha and today i dont feel good and i think that why I didnt feel up with it. Well till tommro.

Although Rene did not discuss Ken with other classmates during this difficult period, she struggled through her problems with him in ways that are reminiscent of the discussion sessions that followed tutoring. For example, she described her problems and her frustrations with Ken. However, instead of waiting for a suggestion from a peer or the teacher, she posited her own solution: "Maybe I should tell him that tommro - and I will." Later on in the year, as her problems with Ken persisted, Rene sometimes shared her concerns out loud with the rest of the class. She continued to experiment with her own solutions as well as those suggested by her classmates. Finally, she and Ken's teacher, Peggy Smullin, initiated a written dialogue on a weekly basis. Rene would submit her field note entries to Ken's teacher, and the teacher would respond by suggesting ways to address Rene's problems. On one occasion, Ken's teacher, Peggy, wrote the following note in response to Rene's tentative decision to exchange Ken for another tutee:

> Dear Rene,
>
> Did you decide to exchange tutees yet? I know Ken can be a handful. You've done a very good job so far, but if you feel you two aren't getting along well enough I trust your judgment. You are a good tutor and you deserve to work with someone who is willing to cooperate with you.
>
> Love,
>
> Peggy.

In addition to writing this letter, Peggy also talked with tutees about the problems tutors were having. Together they brainstormed ways to make tutoring a more pleasant experience for tutor and tutee alike. Some tutees, including Ken, decided to write "sorry notes" to their tutors. Judging by Rene's next two entries, Peggy and the tutees' efforts made a difference:

> Rene, 3/2/88
>
> Ken was good today. He listened to me when I was reading. He was real interested in alligators today. I hope he's interested in alligators tommoro and I hope he's twice as good as he was today. Maybe I don't have to change now. But there's always tommorrow you know.
>
> Rene, 3/3/88
>
> Everything was perfect today. He wrote me a sorry letter and he even wrote about the book without even getting mad at me.

Sometimes, the discussion sessions that followed tutoring focused on issues that concern all teachers. During one discussion about *In the Night Kitchen* by Maurice Sendak, tutors talked about books that they felt were appropriate and inappropriate for their tutees. Cecily, who had read this book several times to her tutee, initiated the discussion by asking her classmates for their advice:

> *Cecily:* I know it's a good idea to keep reading them their favorite books over and over again. But I don't know if she wants me to read it again because she really likes the story or because she just likes to see the picture of the naked baby boy. She keeps wanting to go back to that and she just laughs and laughs.
>
> *Alice:* These parents don't send their kids to school to have us read them dirty books! They sure would be mad if they knew their kids were seeing books like that—and that we were reading them to them!
>
> *Javier:* Alice, it's just a baby. That's the way babies look. There's nothing wrong with that.

The discussion continued, with Alice on the side of censorship and outrage and most of the rest of the class insisting she was overreacting. After a while, Alice concurred with the rest of the group that it was probably all right to read the book if you felt it would not offend your tutee. However, she made it clear that she personally did not approve of books containing pictures of naked children and would never read them to her tutee.

As is evident in the preceding examples, tutors' interactions with their tutees and with other tutors contributed to their knowledge about teaching. They were forced to grapple with issues that have concerned teachers for centuries (e.g., the role of authority in the teacher-student relationship and the role of censorship in teaching). Moreover, as they worked through these and other issues together, they also learned about the role collaboration can play in bringing about change in their teaching and learning. Fortunately, our collaboration led to the same realization.

What We Learned

The following themes emerged from our examination of Cindy's field notes, the tutors' field notes, and videotapes of tutoring sessions. Initially, it was Cindy's intention to address the research questions listed earlier in this chapter. However, as is often the case with qualitative research, we uncovered themes that did not exactly fit our initial

framework. The following discussion represents a brief summary of four overlapping themes that have recurred during our time together. Additional information about our findings and this particular tutoring experience are included in the 1991 volume *Children of Promise: Literate Activity in Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Classrooms* (Heath & Mangiola, 1991).

1. With time, many tutors relinquished the role of all-knowing teacher and learned to collaborate in their tutees' literacy development.

At the beginning of the school year, tutors talked to tutees as traditional classroom teachers would; they did almost all the talking. Tutees' verbal contributions usually consisted of answers to their tutors' known information questions. Sometimes tutors appeared to ignore their tutees. When reading, they forgot to make the book available to the tutee or to point out any illustrations. Once tutees stopped behaving like model students, tutors confronted the same kinds of problems that many teachers have with their students. Tutees misbehaved. They appeared to be bored or complained that they didn't want to participate in the activities that their tutors had planned.

The discussions that followed tutoring usually focused on how to deal with these tutoring problems. Leslie, Cindy, the tutees' teachers, and their tutor colleagues often suggested that a tutor who was having a problem with a tutee adopt a less authoritarian role. We also watched and discussed videos of tutoring exchanges when tutors and tutees read or wrote together or when tutees began to read on their own. Gradually, most tutors abandoned their authoritarian style and took on a more collaborative approach to learning with their tutees. They shared the activity of reading, with tutors reading one page or line in a book and tutees reading another. By January, many encouraged their tutees to read on their own in whatever way they could. When tutees insisted they could not read, tutors insisted they could and encouraged them to seek meaning from pictures rather than print or to read wordless books. Writing also became a shared activity. Again, tutors encouraged tutees to write, and praised them for any sort of writing they produced. Tutors kept these writings in a folder and examined them carefully to decipher their meaning and to figure out their tutees' stage of writing development. They also dictated tutees' stories, which they jointly edited, revised, and illustrated. In our opinion, this move to a more collaborative stance toward tutoring

would not have been possible if tutors did not care deeply about their tutees. Over the course of the year, we felt that the tutors' sense of responsibility toward their tutees increased. They realized, with our prompting, that they played an important role in their tutees' learning and life at school.

2. Tutoring provided tutors with opportunities to articulate and solve problems.

At the beginning of the school year, tutors and tutees passed through a honeymoon phase. They adored one another. Tutors' discussions and field notes conveyed positive comments about their tutees' behavior (e.g., "Today Fernando was a good boy" or "Maria really listened") as well as descriptions of what happened during tutoring sessions. When tutors started having problems with tutees, discussion sessions like those that involved Ana and Cecily (see earlier excerpted dialogue) became times for posing and solving problems. Also, many tutors, like Rene (see earlier excerpted passages), used their field notes to work through problems.

3. Tutors reflected on their tutees' development of literacy.

Leslie did many things to help tutors realize that they were witnesses to and participants in their tutees' emerging literacy development. During the preparation phase at the beginning of the school year, she talked about how students develop literacy and how their reading, writing, and speaking may change over time. Discussions that followed tutoring often focused on tutees' writing or reading. Tutors wrote letters summarizing their tutees' progress to the tutees' teachers. When discussing their tutees' emerging literacy development, they identified the strategies that they thought their tutees employed when reading or writing. Tutors described some children as trying to read by letter and others as reading from the pictures. Most tutors were convinced that their tutees were readers and writers regardless of the nature of their "reading" and "writing." As Lucy so aptly put it in her field notes, "All little kids know how to read."

4. Excellent tutors were not always doing well in other areas of their life at school.

For some students, cross-age tutoring was the only activity in which they excelled. We have worked with tutors who engaged in literacy-based activity at school only during cross-age tutoring. Students with a long history of "acting out" at school became our most

dedicated tutors. We have also worked with energetic and outgoing tutors who were silent and marginal participants in other classroom events. Thanks to cross-age tutoring, we have had an opportunity to learn about these tutors' abilities. Yet, not surprisingly, we have found their cases puzzling, and we have wondered what it is about tutoring that could be incorporated into the rest of the school day so that these children would be active and willing participants in other learning events.

Conclusion

Most educational research does not address the day-to-day reality of teachers and students. Like other modes of social science research, this research genre is dedicated to uncovering generalized practices and principles. The particulars of working through the kinds of immediate and specific problems that students and their teachers confront are not the concern of this research tradition. Attempts to make research relevant to teachers and students necessitate reconceptualizing and combining the processes of researching, teaching, and learning in classroom settings. Drawing upon Atkin's (1991) perspective about educational research, as well as our own experiences, we feel that the practical knowledge that guides teachers' actions is made more explicit when their classroom experiences become the focus of their immediate inquiry. Atkin advocates an approach that brings teachers together to investigate their practice by reflecting on it, critiquing it, and acting upon it. We feel we took this process one step further by including students and thereby involving them in the kinds of reflective enterprise that many feel will enhance their own intellectual development.

Although our discussions and dialogue did not necessarily lead to immediate solutions or generalized discoveries, we learned how collaboration can enhance our development as teachers and learners. As researching teachers and tutors, we relied on one another's immediate experiences, perspectives, and strategies when we reflected on and considered ways to improve upon teaching and learning in our classroom. Important insights about the role of teachers and the nature of learning emerged from our discussions and writings. Moreover, these activities helped us to extend and refine the strategies we relied on as teachers and learners.

Notes

1. We would like to acknowledge Lois Bird, Gloria Norton, Pat Yencho, and Carole Edelsky, who contributed to our discussions and our ways of reconsidering our role in literature study sessions. Excerpts from literature study sessions that we facilitated are included in "Beyond Comprehension: The Power of Literature Study for Language Minority Students" by Lois Bird and Lucinda Pease-Alvarez, *TESOL Elementary ESOL Education News, 10,* 1.

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6 The Collected Letters of Two Collaborative Researchers

Katharine Davies Samway
San Jose State University

Dorothy Taylor
Erie Community College

Buffalo, New York

Dear Reader:

I met Katharine Davies Samway on a fall evening in 1985. We had both attended an informal gathering of teachers held at a mutual friend's house where we discussed writing. At the time, I was teaching ESOL (English to speakers of other languages) in Rochester, New York, and Katharine was working toward her doctorate at the University of Rochester. At the end of the evening, Katharine asked a friend and me if we would be willing to participate in a study of nonnative English-speaking children's writing processes that she was planning for her doctoral research. We both said yes. I don't think Katharine knew how many reservations lurked behind my "yes." I was afraid that I'd gotten a little too cocky, bragging about my students and just how much we were accomplishing, writing-wise, in the classroom. To make matters worse, Katharine kept commenting on how excited she was to have the opportunity to visit a classroom where "real" and "meaningful" writing was going on. I was only in my second year of teaching in an elementary school and Katharine had a well-established and respected reputation in the ESOL educational community in Rochester. The more I thought about it, the more I became convinced that she was going to come into my classroom and denounce me as a fraud, a charlatan who talked a better lesson than I taught.

I did not renege on my offer, though, because I truly was interested in children's writing. I had recently read Donald Graves's "Writing: Teachers and Children at Work," and I was convinced that my ESOL

students were benefiting from a process approach to writing. I loved reading the pieces that the children were writing, but the whole notion of self-selected topics, peer conferences, and revising was pretty new to me. I craved the company of someone who knew something about these things and was as eager to learn about the writing of nonnative English-speaking children as I was.

If Katharine thought of me as a fraud when she visited my classroom, she was too kind to say so. It wasn't easy for me to open up my classroom to another adult, but after I got used to her in "my" classroom, working with "my" kids, I came to appreciate having someone with similar educational perspectives and concerns to talk to. After school we spent hours, usually on the telephone, talking about the kids and their writing, and discussing articles that we had read.

At the end of that school year, I moved to Boston where I took an ESOL job teaching nonnative English-speaking children in two K–8 elementary schools in Brookline, Massachusetts. I was working with the children in small groups, pulling them out of their mainstream classrooms for about forty-five minutes each day. Literacy continued to be an important part of my program, and I was just as excited about the children's writing as I had been in Rochester, but I missed the shared classroom involvement that Katharine and I had fostered over the past year. Katharine again took the initiative. One day, when I was talking excitedly on the telephone to her about my students' writing, she suggested a research project grounded in correspondence. She would correspond with my students about their writing, asking them to become co-researchers as they investigated their own writing processes. Katharine was interested in exploring how corresponding about writing would influence the children's powers of reflection. She was also interested in the kinds of changes that might occur in her own and possibly my reflective thinking. She made it clear that she was eager to include particular areas of interest that the students and I might be interested in pursuing. The idea intrigued me because I welcomed the chance to continue our research relationship, but beyond a general interest in learning more about children's writing processes, I had no specific research questions in mind. At that point, I viewed Katharine as the "researcher" and my role as more teacher consultant—to use my knowledge of the students and the classroom to "help" Katharine pursue her research goals. Not long after our conversation, Katharine visited me on her way to a conference in New Hampshire. She arrived late, around 10 p.m., and we worked through the night. I showed her samples of the children's writing and she took notes about each of the

students to whom she would write. The morning sunlight was starting to come in through my dining room window when we finally stopped talking and went to bed.

That's how our research project began. In our letters and telephone conversations, Katharine and I have often discussed the changes that we have gone through since then. Rather than describe and summarize those changes in a more traditional format, we've decided to let our letters tell you the story. Between us, we have written a total of over sixty letters since that October 1986 meeting, about 100 pages worth of text. We have had to cut them extensively for inclusion in this chapter, giving precedence to our reflections on the nature of our research relationship and what was happening to us and to the children as readers, writers, and thinkers as a result of our correspondence. But we have also tried to leave traces of the elements that inspired those reflections—sharing and commenting on our writing and reading, soliciting advice, suggesting articles and books to read, and apologizing for what we hadn't accomplished.

In her September 1988 letter, Katharine wrote, "Project doesn't seem to accurately capture the nature or scope of what we've been doing." I think she's right. "Project" implies a beginning and an end. The reflections and insights the children, Katharine, and I have shared have incorporated themselves into my thinking too fully to mark a beginning or an end.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Taylor

Boston, Massachusetts

October 27

Dear Katharine:

It's so nice to have someone to talk to who's as excited about my students and their writing as I am. I'll be anxious to see how the letter writing goes, how the kids respond to your interest in their writing, and what they have to say.

Just to recap, here's a review of the six sixth- through eighth-grade students who you'll be sending letters to—I think their English is developed well enough to carry on a correspondence: (1) Julio, a fourth grader from Argentina who is in his second year here; (2) Javier, a sixth grader and Julio's stepbrother, also

from Argentina; (3) Juan, a sixth grader from Venezuela who has been in the U.S. for about nine months; (4) Homa, a seventh grader who arrived here in the fifth grade from Iran; (5) Shanti, a seventh-grade special education student who arrived here from India when she was in the fourth grade; and (6) Bopha, an eighth-grade Cambodian orphan refugee who lives with her adopted American mother. She's also in special education and arrived here two years ago.

I'm looking forward to seeing how it goes.

Spencerport, New York

November 9

Dear Dorothy:

Here at last are the letters. I wrote a base letter which I then tried to personalize as best I could for each child. As you'll see, my questions deal mostly with their writing habits in English and their native language. I haven't sealed the envelopes so that you can read them first and decide if this is something that you want to be involved with.

You will see that I have not "written down" to the children and if you see problems with that, please let me know. I must admit that I would love to see their reactions when they read them!

If you and any of the children decide to pursue this, we'll need to figure out how to approach it so that it fits with your own interests, needs, and agenda. I'm keeping my fingers crossed. Although working together is sure to be difficult, I think it will be more rewarding than working alone and I'm looking forward to the possibility of working collaboratively with you. The key word here is "collaboratively," as that is exactly how I would like to be involved. However, it's such a new concept for me in this kind of context that I'm not sure where to go from here. I'm hoping that you have some suggestions!

Boston, Massachusetts

December 30

Katharine:

I am finally sending you the tape of the kids' reactions to your letters, your dissertation chapters, and a Frank Smith book. You

probably have a copy of the book already; if so, pass it along to someone else who would appreciate it. I got it for a song at a used bookstore in Washington.

Spencerport, New York

January 6

Dear Dorothy:

I've enclosed copies of the children's letters as well as copies of my reply. I hope that I'm not asking too much of them. If you get the chance you might want to encourage them not to worry too much about the appearance of their letters (spelling, handwriting, neatness, etc.). I'd rather they put their time into the ideas, etc. I've left it a little vague in places simply to see what they come up with. Let me know how the idea of a daily journal turns out. As you will see, I have basically asked them to do three things:

1. keep a journal for future reference . . . and also so they could possibly send copies in the future. I haven't mentioned that, though, as I think it might be overwhelming;
2. answer some specific questions that I have posed (and posed earlier, if I'm not mistaken) about their writing habits and preferences in English and their native language; and
3. rank their stories and evaluate them in writing.

I am sure that you will have lots of suggestions for me and questions that you think I should ask. I'm looking forward to hearing from you all. I feel very good doing this with you.

Spencerport, New York

January 17

Dear Dorothy:

Just a quick note to let you know that I listened to the tape of the children receiving my first letter and to thank you very much for sending it. I got back from Oakland on Monday and thought I'd be able to sort through my mail while listening to the tape. I didn't get to sort out the mail as I was entranced by the children.

I was impressed with their ability to ask questions, infer, and just plain talk about the letter and their own writing. I hope that the two boys will decide to write after all.

Dear Readers:

In November 1986, Katharine wrote to seven students. They were not required to write back to her, and two students responded to that initial letter. The two boys that Katharine just referred to never wrote back to her. The frequency of the correspondence between Katharine and the students varied a great deal. (Table 1 details when the correspondence with each student began and ended, and how many letters each student and Katharine wrote to each other by year.)

Table 1. The following data portray the frequency of correspondence between Katharine and the students. Each figure in parentheses refers to the number of letters which Katharine wrote to that student.

Student	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	Total
Homa	1 (1)	6 (7)	4 (8)	1	(1)		12 (17)
Shanti	(1)	3 (4)	6 (6)	4 (4)			13 (15)
Juana	1 (1)	(1)					1 (2)
Julio	(1)						(1)
Bopha	(1)						(1)
Javier	(1)						(1)
Jacki	(1)						(1)
Gary		1 (1)	7 (10)	(1)	3 (3)	(1)	11 (16)
Ali		1 (2)	(2)				1 (4)
Eduardo		4 (3)	4 (8)				8 (11)
Peter		(1)	5 (5)	3 (4)	6 (5)	(1)	14 (16)
Gabriela			1 (1)				1 (1)
Lana			2 (1)	1 (2)			3 (3)
Ana			1 (1)	1 (1)			2 (2)

Oakland, California

May 24

Dear Dorothy:

I have meant to write to you for a long time—so my apologies for taking so long. I have thought very often about the two girls who wrote to me (Homa and Shanti), and I have felt dreadful that I haven't written back. It's not even a consequence of lack of time, etc., but a case of not knowing what to write to them. I think a major part of the problem is that the floundering was due to my not having thought it through well enough—there are benefits to being impetuous, but this is one example of the detriments. I would appreciate any suggestions from you on how to handle it before the end of the school year—I have a letter from Homa gazing at me from my desk each day.

Boston, Massachusetts

May 27

Dear Katharine:

I received your letter today. . . . Funny that you should have mentioned Homa, because Shanti, who is in Homa's class, just today mentioned your letter. It went something like this. "Remember that lady that wrote to us. I was looking at her letter today." Then Homa petulantly said, "I wrote to her and she hasn't written back." Actually, I know what you mean about not knowing what to do. I've pondered the situation myself, particularly my role and what I should, could, or might do. Short-term, I would suggest that you do write to Homa with perhaps one thought-provoking question that you might have about her writing, if you would like to continue the relationship. I think it's very likely that she would respond. Be it Homa or other students, in the long-run, I think it would be more productive if I were to actually include the letter writing in my class time. I was willing to give them class time to write the letters this year, but I think that I was so eager not to interject myself into their letters that I appeared somewhat apathetic. As a result, I think we (my students and I) missed a valuable opportunity. I haven't given them enough reflection time, and I regret it. If you're interested in another trial run next year, I would suggest actually

setting up a time schedule for the letters. Perhaps we worried too much about what to ask or what to say instead of just sitting down and asking it or saying it on a regular basis. Let me know what you think.

Oakland, California

June 18

Dear Dorothy:

Thanks very much for your letter. It was also good to talk with you on the telephone.

I haven't done too much intensive thinking about our "project" next year since talking with you last, but if you'll bear with me, I'll try to do some brainstorming right now. Right now, I think the most prominent question for me would be to see how the children's (and my/our) powers of reflection change over time and how these changes are interconnected with their reading and writing experiences and proficiency. I suppose one way would be for us to take similar roles, but to consider different aspects. For example, perhaps dialogue journals focusing on books they have read (you) and stories they have written (me) would be the way to go. Perhaps it would be better to focus on just one very small topic. By the way, in order to underscore the dialogue nature of the project (and I realize now that that is as important as the powers of reflection), I would be willing to share my own stories/vignettes and my own comparative evaluations of them with the children, if you think that would help. This sounds a little far-fetched, given that I would not want to write pieces that have the sole purpose of modeling; that is, I'd want them to be interesting to me on a personal, genuine, and communicative level. I've been playing around with some short pieces, many of which I think would also be interesting to children.

I like your idea of having a time line. In fact, I suspect that that's what's needed in order to get the project going and to maintain it, at least at the beginning. Here's a draft schedule for you to pull apart [two schedules followed]. In this schedule, we each write every two weeks. I'm looking forward to seeing your ideas on this.

We also need to consider the kinds of questions/issues that we think the children could benefit from focusing on, e.g., which

of these drafts/stories do you think is best and why? I've just re-read your letter and I must admit that I agree with you—we probably spent too much time worrying about what to ask or say last year. So, ignore the previous comment if you want! Another issue is your role at other times. For instance, you may want to give direct instruction/model reflecting on writing, etc. Boy, it sounds like a lot of work, doesn't it? But exciting, too! I really am looking forward to working on this more with you.

Boston, Massachusetts

August 22

Dear Katharine:

I'm going to put a note of apology about my turnaround time into the computer's memory because I seem to start every letter with it. I did enjoy hearing from you and appreciate the thought that went into it regarding the "project."

My first reaction was, and continues to be, that the first schedule you included is the better one. Most of my questions center around logistics and concerns about the students responding to your reflective comments. In some ways, I very much like the idea as a way for you to become closer to the students and also to serve as a model. By seeing the kinds of reflections that you are making about your own writing, the students could use these comments as examples, or models, for their own reflections. On the other hand, the modeling part worries me somewhat. Modeling is good only to the extent that the "modelees" feel they have the freedom to reject the model—or pull from it only what they feel comfortable with. What I'm trying to say is that I wouldn't want the students to feel constrained, limited, overawed, or whatever by your reflections. However, I'm not stating this as a certainty and would love to hear your thoughts on it. To tell you the truth, it's a problem I struggle with almost daily in the classroom.

I have an idea. Could we (you and me) send reading journals to each other? I would enjoy that for purely personal reasons and would feel as if I were participating more actively in the project with such involvement. My reflections/responses about the books that I'm reading would be written to you at the same time as the children are writing theirs. By the way, I like the idea of a journal form to add continuity to their writings. What do

you think of actually writing back and forth to the students in a composition-type book?

As to doing it with all of my students, I can't see my very beginning students becoming involved in such a project—at least not for about four or five months. I have three eighth-grade students who I am most looking forward to including—they include two from last year: Homa (Did she respond to your letter?) and Shanti, the Indian special education girl who did not respond last time, but I think will willingly respond this year, and Ali, an Iranian boy who came around February of last year.

Yes, yes, I think there will be a natural connection between the reading journals and your correspondence about writing, and I will send you copies of the reading journals. I don't know what kind of connecting beyond bound associations between reading and writing you have in mind. After all, writers are readers each time they read their own text, and readers are writers whenever they think to themselves that they would have changed the ending or eliminated a character in a story. These seem to be strong associations in themselves. I guess it's obvious that I'm a firm believer in letting the journals set their own pace, and would like to think it's more than procrastination or my own lackadaisical nature, but please share your thoughts and suggestions here.

I hope that at least some of the above has made some sense and that I have moved us forward a little bit, and not backward.

Dear Readers:

Although we talked about setting up a schedule for the students and Katharine to write to each other, we never instituted one. It was not a deliberate decision but evolved out of the more spontaneous nature of this long-distance correspondence. We did not want to force the students to write, which would have dramatically altered the correspondence from an authentic one to one resembling a task over which they had no control. Some students never wrote to Katharine, while others maintained a long-term correspondence with her.

At this point, Dorothy was corresponding with some of her students by means of a reading dialogue journal. Reading dialogue journals are booklets in which letters are exchanged between two or more people about books they are reading. In an earlier telephone conversa-

tion, Dorothy had talked with Katharine about linking a study of the reading journals with the correspondence project. While Katharine explored how students reflected on their writing processes, Dorothy would focus on their reading responses and reflections. We agreed that the two kinds of correspondence (Katharine's about writing and Dorothy's about reading) would involve similar issues and questions. However, the reading journal correspondence gave Dorothy her own niche to carve and explore. For the first time, she viewed herself as a researcher with questions that she wanted answered. Dorothy was corresponding in the reading journals with the more fluent speakers of English, and they were the students that she suggested Katharine write to. It was around this time that Dorothy and Katharine also began to correspond in their own reading dialogue journal. Future references to "reading journals" refer to the correspondence about books between either students and Dorothy, or Katharine and Dorothy.

Boston, Massachusetts

September 8

Dear Katharine:

Just a quick note to tell you about some new students who you might be interested in writing to: (1) Ali—a seventh grader from Iran who came speaking no English around February of last year. I think he's at a point language-wise where he would be able to correspond with you. I've also just recently started to correspond with him in a reading journal. (2) Gary, a fourth grader from Taiwan who has been in Brookline for two and a half years. (3) Peter, Gary's brother who is in the fifth grade. Both boys are fairly fluent in English, but still have difficulty with reading and writing. And (4) Eduardo, a seventh grader from Mexico. He attended a German/English/Spanish trilingual(!!) school in Mexico. He's here for a year, staying with an aunt to improve his English. He's conversant in English, but not fluent.

I assume you'll continue writing to Homa, and you also might want to try writing to Shanti again. She has gained a lot of self-confidence in the last year, and I think she is much more likely to respond. I will encourage all of the kids to respond and will give them time during my class and whatever help I can. I'm looking forward to seeing how it goes.

Oakland, California

September 13

Dear Dorothy:

I discovered once again how difficult it is to write to strangers, particularly when one wants something from them. I feel more than a little inadequate in these letters. In an effort to be brief and understandable (which I haven't done particularly well), I think that my letters are incredibly dull and confusing. However, if your enthusiasm is as high as it was when we talked, you may save the day for me. It was interesting to me that while struggling with these letters, I wanted to write to Homa . . . In our last letters, it felt as if we were getting to know each other a little bit and it hadn't felt so artificial. I share this with you, not as a complaint (how could it be, as it's something I want to do), but as an attempt to explain away the gross weaknesses in the letters. I couldn't decide what to ask them to do and ended up with these—Which of your stories do you think is best? Why? Why were certain stories easier/harder to write?—simply because they fit within the general interest that I have in young people's reflective/evaluative skills and because they seem to be open-ended enough to allow for any comments that the students may want to share. As you can see, I can use all the help I can get from you!

Dear Readers:

Katharine had deliberately written very brief letters because both she and Dorothy were concerned that longer (and more complex) letters were daunting to the students. After writing long letters the previous year, letters in which she asked students to carefully observe and record their writing processes and practices, only two students had written back to her; of those two, one did not continue corresponding after an initial response.

Boston, Massachusetts

September 26

Dear Katharine:

I'm equally as pleased about Homa's letters. You will have seen that her second letter with the draft story was short. There was

obviously much more that went on in her working with the story. It had originally been a story for her English class, but not what the teacher wanted—assigned topics, of course. She (Homa) had questioned the ending, and we had discussed the nice touch of the reference to the grandmother at the beginning which she had not consciously done, but was pleased about when she read it over. The point I'm trying to make is that I think you have to show her that you're interested in those kinds of reflections. It sounds artificial when I tell her you'd like to hear about such and such. You have such a nice relationship with her at this point that I'm sure that a sharing of her thoughts about writing will develop pretty easily with your encouragement.

Javier, Eduardo, and Ali have read your letters, enjoyed them and will be responding soon. Shanti has actually begun a letter to you—literally walked in the next day after I gave her the letter and sat down and started writing to you.

Boston, Massachusetts

January 4

Dear Katharine:

Thank you for responding to my story. I haven't done anything more with it yet—mostly because the snake died and it was much more traumatic than I would have ever thought a snake's death could be. I do plan to get back to it and will send you a copy when that happens.

The kids, as usual, were thrilled with your letters, and I assume by now that you have heard from most of them. I must admit that with this letter writing business, I find myself walking a tightrope between involving myself too little in their responses and feeling that they don't really respond to your questions at all, and involving myself too much so that you get more of me than you do of them. Even Homa is reluctant to respond to your more thought-provoking questions, and Shanti often seems to be overwhelmed by them. I give examples or speak from my own experience with my own writing and then leave it to them, hoping I've hit a happy medium. What are your thoughts on the matter?

Dear Readers:

As the previous letter suggests, Dorothy and Katharine had begun to share their own writing. Katharine had also started to send drafts of her writing to the students, to which they responded. This act of sharing her own writing and writing processes appeared to have a profound impact on the correspondence, as a more noticeable dialogue began to occur in the letters.

Oakland, California

January 13

Dear Dorothy:

In your last letter, you asked about the degree to which you should be cajoling the students. I can't imagine this correspondence working at all without your intimate involvement. In fact, I think that this triangular "design" is one of the most interesting facets of it. To go back to your original question about your involvement, I appreciate your concerns. To be honest, I haven't detected anything that sounded like you. But only you can tell. I don't think there's anything wrong with you talking things through with them, etc. Would it help, do you think, if you were to share excerpts from our reading journals and letters?

I have been going through a lot of changes as I write to the youngsters. I have rethought many times my purpose in corresponding with them, and I now find myself approaching it more as a means to communicate with other (young) writers rather than as a means to gather "interesting data." Sharing my own writing with them has underscored this. Once that became clear to me, I found myself relaxing and enjoying the process more. It seemed to coincide with an opening up on their part, too.

Thank you very much for sending the copy of Shanti's journal. I have really enjoyed reading and rereading it. I must admit, I can't get over how much reading seems to be going on. It's impressive. How do you organize it? What are the guidelines and procedures, etc.? What a wonderful and anecdotal record-keeping system. I especially like the entries where you share yourself as a human being and reader/writer. I'm looking forward to seeing the other journals.

I've enclosed a copy of the most recent draft of a story that I'm working on. I'm terribly stuck on the ending. How can I

convey my grief and yet avoid a blow-by-blow account? Help! This is the draft that I've sent to some of the youngsters.

I loved reading your reading journal. Sorry that it has taken me so long to respond. I've thought about it an awful lot. In some ways, it's better than having a conversation. This way I can go back to it time after time and not have to rely on a faltering memory. It might be interesting to take a look at ways in which entries that you write to me are similar to or different from those that you write to your students. I just wrote this sentence after rereading parts of your journal and parts of Shanti's, readings that were not originally connected in any way. I have just realized that I write to you in substantially different ways from how I write to the youngsters, differences that have nothing to do with how well I know you all. For example, I don't think I have really ever told them very much about my reading and writing processes, whereas I do tell you. Perhaps I should be doing more of this with the students. Instead, I still seem to be the Grand Inquisitor from afar. I'll work on it.

Boston, Massachusetts

January 25

Dear Katharine:

How nice to get so many goodies from you this week. Your letter, story, and reading journal arrived on Tuesday. Gary and Shanti have both received their letters from you. It's such a pleasure to see their faces light up when they tell me about it.

The reading journals are moving along. I have to admit that these journals are enough to have made this school year worthwhile. You asked about my organizational procedures. Reading is done totally outside my class. Occasionally, I will help them find or recommend a book if they seem stuck, and I have taken to recording a couple of books for Ali, who finds that much easier. Beyond that, my role has been simply to respond to their writing. Journals are given to me twice a week. My greatest problem in this endeavor has been to get them to do more than just tell me about the contents of the books they are reading. On the other hand, even if that's all I get I consider it a jewel, just to know what they read for pleasure and to see how they choose to portray what they are reading. I have to admit that responding to their journals is the least onerous teaching task I have to do.

Oakland, California

May 20

Dear Dorothy:

Although I was disappointed that we weren't able to all talk together today, it was still a very enjoyable phone call. I'm looking forward to talking with you all next week. [*We had planned a group conversation using the principal's speaker phone, but couldn't get it to work, so the students spoke to Katharine individually.*] Thanks very much for all you're doing and have done to get and keep me in touch with the youngsters.

I've enclosed copies of the letters to and from Eduardo, Homa, and Gary that I mailed out today. I wish I had an entry from my reading journal, but I haven't had a minute to write in it.

Oakland, California

September 20 (and 21)

Dear Dorothy:

It's been such a long time since I wrote or talked with you. I've enclosed several things for you, including copies of the letters that the youngsters and I have written most recently. I was very touched by Shanti's letter. I was really impressed with her use of the quote from my letter to her, "It makes such a difference when you can hear a friend's voice." I look forward so much to hearing from them and love reading and rereading their letters.

I know you're going to feel like killing me when you see how long my letters are to the children, particularly Gary. I really did try to make them shorter, but I find it impossible, particularly if I am to share myself with them. (Is this a problem of authenticity?) I see a difference, though, between the content of my earlier long letters (tons of questions) and now (more about my life, my reading, and my writing). I'm not sure why, but I just don't seem able to be brief. I think, though, that this is a compliment to the children—when I enjoy writing to a person, a brief, truncated letter just won't do, except in the most extreme cases. By the way, I went through three drafts for Gary. In the second draft, I simplified some sentence structures. I then reread my last letter and discovered that I had already told him about Gary Paulsen. I then had to revise

this and added the Katherine Paterson bit. All the while, though, I was constantly changing sentences to make them as clear as possible—I know, I didn't succeed as much as I might have; at times, I rationalized a bit and said to myself, "They need to see 'real' writing!" Sometimes I just plain rebelled at using the more simplified, better-known word over and over again. I think I get into this rebellious stage when I remember those controlled ESOL readers. However, I then have to remind myself that the one thing I most want to come out of this letter writing is that the children understand (more or less) what I have written and will want to write back. For me, this "project" has progressed from a bit of an exercise to a genuine correspondence. "Project" doesn't seem to capture the nature or scope of what we've been doing.

Maybe this would be a good time to assess where we've been, where we're going, and whether or not it has been worth it. I'm also wondering if we aren't ready to establish together (and with the students too, perhaps) what we'd like to do this year and what we'd like to find out about, e.g., our language learning and usage processes. One of the benefits for me has been what I have learned about myself, what the youngsters have taught me about myself, as a literate person. I wasn't looking for or expecting that, but I think it says a lot for cross-age correspondence, particularly when the older participant assumes a more natural role than I had at the beginning. A constant, nagging concern for me has been the question, "What's been in this for Dorothy?" I have often tried to figure out what's in this for you and wonder whether I haven't been listening to you well enough. I want this to be 100 percent collaborative, but I often feel like I'm pushing my own agenda and not searching enough for or responding to yours.

Boston, Massachusetts

October 3

Dear Katharine:

Your letter was just what I needed to inspire me to write to you. I was thrilled to see the letters that the kids wrote to you this summer. I have to admit that I enjoy them all the more knowing that I had no part in them. It's obvious that you've established a relationship with them apart from me.

I agree with you. I think it is time to ask, and answer, some questions about what we've been doing and why we've been doing it. Originally, I think I was eager to collaborate with you because I recognized that you would provide a valuable research link that seldom exists inside the school. You were someone who would encourage me (and sometimes push me) to ask questions of myself and of the kids. I can't say that I had any specific guidelines in mind, other than that we had a common interest in writing and I was curious to know how ESL students involved themselves in writing and how I, as their teacher, could help them. Last year, my motives were a little more clear-cut, and they had both a research and an instructional purpose. I liked the idea of someone from the outside asking the same kinds of questions that I was asking about the nature of students' writing and reading. For one thing, it validated what I was doing. (I do get a little tired of kids looking at me like I come from outer space when I ask them questions like, "What have you learned from such and such?") You could be my joint outer space monster actually asking them to reflect on their own learning! Also, as I've mentioned before, your letters allowed me to put myself in an advocacy position with them by helping them figure out what you meant by your questions and how they might answer them. I admit that I sometimes felt as if I had the weight of understanding or lack of understanding on my shoulders, but it also allowed me to learn a great deal about what went on in their heads as they struggled to answer you. Perhaps the greatest piece of knowledge I gained was that they would struggle to answer you, and that they continue to answer you whether I am encouraging them or not. Another reason that I was particularly interested in a joint project last year was that I thought that it would complement my current interest in reading journals as a way to get kids to think about their reading. I thought that your questions about their writing and mine about their reading would make a good combination. And I think it did. In fact, it wasn't until a few months down the road that I realized just how closely they were related. I think that you had a lot to do with making me see the connection, I might add. On a more personal level, our relationship has allowed me to connect with someone else who has an equal interest in reading and writing for her own benefit (as opposed to the kids' benefit). Corresponding and talking with you has inspired me as a reader

and a writer. True, we complain about the sporadic nature of our letters and reading journal, but I even find myself composing entries to you when I can't sleep, entries that never quite make their way into the journal or letters. Some might not see this as an important part of educational research, but I have no doubt that these reflections influence how I interact with and what I hope for my students in their interactions with me.

I think I've been talking about collaborative research on many different levels or through several different relationships: (1) researcher—collecting, analyzing, and reporting data; (2) teacher—sharing our knowledge with someone else; (3) student— incorporating new knowledge into our previous schema of thinking; and (4) friend— showing concern for and interest in another human being. I might add that I see these relationships as fairly fluid. In other words, I am often a teacher, but at other times I am the researcher, student, and always the friend. So "researcher" is not synonymous with "Katharine"; "teacher" with "Dorothy"; and "student" with "Peter," "Gary," or whomever. I hope you're with me so far, because my point is that this is collaborative research—this interaction of relationships around a common interest. Ours happens to be reading and writing.

I think that our correspondence and phone calls make it clear that we are involved in similar issues, our papers show that we are learning from this project, and the kids, through their writing and reading journals, show that they are benefiting. I agree that we need to ask ourselves more specifically how and why this is happening. But the other point that I want to make about collaborative research is that, to me, it doesn't necessarily have to mean that everyone is asking the same questions, but rather that they are asking complementary questions.

I hope I have explained some of my motivations and interests in our research. As to where our research should go from here, I would be curious to hear more from you about your thoughts on the benefits of the correspondence with the kids. For example, what have the kids taught you about yourself as a literate person? And what is your feeling about how the kids have benefited from this correspondence? I have to confess that I think they have benefited in ways I didn't expect. I was shocked at the beginning to discover that with few exceptions (perhaps only Homa), they really didn't quite know what correspondence

was all about. I don't just mean the formal structure of a letter (dating it, salutations) but social forms as well (asking after someone's health or well-being, responding to questions that have been asked). It's easy as a literate adult to forget just how far removed from face-to-face conversation letters are. Simple things like the fact that you refer to the question being answered so the correspondent knows what you're talking about when you say, "Yes, I liked that book, too." Teaching them these things took much longer than I had ever anticipated (especially since it hadn't occurred to me that I'd have to teach them this at all). It is like learning to drive before you've internalized all the skills of steering, accelerating, shifting, etc.—and you want me to have a conversation with the person beside me, too! Perhaps my analogy isn't a perfect one, but I suspect I was anticipating more than I should have when I expected an insightful analysis of their writing also. I say this because I think their responses when I interviewed them with the tape recorder about the reading/writing connection were much more thoughtful. So, I learned a lot last year about the nature of letter writing. Perhaps it wasn't what I expected, but I'm certainly not going to discard it as insignificant.

As to where we should go from here: Let me share with you some of my burning questions; they continue to relate to the reading dialogue journals, and I think also to writing conferences. I keep coming back to my concern about questions—how do questions help the students learn more about themselves as readers and writers and how do they keep them from seeking their own questions and answers? What kinds of questions encourage self-reflection instead of serving as a crutch? I ask myself these questions every time I put pen to one of the reading journals or have a conference with my students. It's also the reason I haven't been able to finish my reading dialogue journal paper. I don't even feel that I have a draft to send you.

Oakland, California

October 24

Dear Dorothy:

I want to let you know how stimulating your letter was.

About the correspondence between the children and me: You will probably have noticed that Shanti and I now conclude with

"Love" instead of "Best wishes." She began this and I thought that it was a very important and significant step for her to take, a step in the direction of a true correspondence. I had spent a long time (probably hours, actually) when I wrote those first letters trying to figure out the most appropriate closing. "Sincerely" seemed too formal and so I grabbed on to "Best wishes," which I hoped conveyed a more personal tone. She's the only one, though, who gets "Love," though that would probably change if the youngsters altered theirs! It was a delight to take the lead from her. I need to go back to our letters, but I have a sneaking suspicion that she now rereads my letters fairly closely and tries to answer my (authentic) questions. For a while, I was concerned that the youngsters were simply answering my questions, rather than initiating questions and corresponding naturally. I then realized that when I write to my mother or you, I do exactly that. I reply to your questions, and then I usually go on to explore them in greater depth and/or raise new issues. I would like to see to what extent she (and others) extend issues and introduce new topics—and what it is that they choose to respond to and/or extend.

Thanks very much for sharing your insights into our "collaboration" and your breakdown of the various components. I agree so much with you about the fluidity of the roles; that's one aspect I particularly appreciate. I agree so much also with your assessment of what collaborative research involves . . . the notion that we aren't asking the same, but complementary questions.

I have to say that this whole collaborative/correspondence experience has altered my view of the world and my role in it in some quite profound ways. I reflect upon my own reading and writing processes more than ever before; I notice other people's; I write more than I did before; I am encouraged to read more than I used to—you've got to read if you're going to write about books, don't you?; I have been privileged to see and know how other people view the world differently, and these different perspectives have enriched my own repertoire of ways of viewing. Your logs and letters do this. The youngsters' comments do, too. I probably found this most with Homa (e.g., her comments about how a story shouldn't be dragged out at the beginning), but the other youngsters' comments about my writing have helped me a lot. It's been very exciting . . . but probably not for

someone who wants the "right" answers. I love never quite knowing what I'm going to find out next.

Oakland, California

Dear Reader:

When I first began working with Dorothy Taylor over five years ago, I would not have called our working relationship "collaborative research." I knew that some researchers who went into classrooms and gathered data, as I did, referred to their research as collaborative, but I questioned the extent to which it was. I knew that Dorothy and I were collaborating on one level, as educators, but I also knew that our research relationship was marginally collaborative. At times I felt constrained by the doctoral requirements (e.g., that the research be conducted by one person), but I complied. It was not too difficult to do so, as the notion of teachers as researchers was still a relatively new one in the United States. After a time, I realized that my data base was too broad, and I abandoned Dorothy's class as a source of data for my dissertation; this action seemed to encourage us to continue working together. I continued to visit her classroom and gather data because we had forged a thoughtful and stimulating partnership.

When we both moved away from the state of New York and began the long-distance letter writing project that is the core of the preceding letters between us, the researcher's role remained predominantly mine. Dorothy was an active participant, but at the beginning she acted primarily as a facilitator, helping the youngsters to understand my letters, giving them time in class to respond, filling me in on contextual information. I knew that I needed Dorothy's support if the project were to succeed, since I did not know the students. Frankly, at the beginning, I still regarded my role as that of a fairly traditional researcher. My early letters reflect the fact that the collaborative part of our research had not evolved that far yet. I raised the questions and discussed them fully with Dorothy, who offered great insights. I wanted to learn about the children, with her help. In time, we both became more comfortable with Dorothy assuming a more active research role. It was not that I thought she could not or should not do research; I was hesitant to ask more of her. We searched for roles that would be satisfying and acceptable to us both.

I learned from both Dorothy and the students. I originally assumed an almost exclusively questioning stance. Taking the students' lead, I learned to reveal more of myself to them (e.g., about my family, my activities, my reading and writing processes and events). By the end of the first year, eight months later (letter of 6/18), I had begun to go through a profound change, and it is this point that marks for me the beginning of a true collaboration with Dorothy. I began to understand, with her help, that the dialogue with the youngsters (the interaction with them) was as important to look at as the students' reflective stance. I invited Dorothy to contemplate this issue, too.

In her letter of August 22, Dorothy cemented this trend toward collaboration when she invited me to participate in a new dimension to our work—to correspond in our own reading journals. For me, this action suggested a more equal dimension to our collaboration. We started to explore issues together, both of us raising topics and making suggestions. We also started to share our writing with each other, responding to and supporting each other. We have been engaged in a continuous process of defining and redefining our research questions. In fact, as early as August 22, Dorothy suggested that we let the journals (and letters) lead us as we explored the students' growing literacy in English. We took on roles that were both similar and different; we came to realize that collaboration does not mean "identical." One of our first discoveries was that initiating and maintaining a dialogue combines a myriad of factors, complex and often intertwined, making for many avenues to explore with our kind of complementary/collaborative research. For example, in my correspondence with the students, I found that I needed to integrate personal dialogue with literary reflection, commentary, and questions. For a teacher working face to face with a child, that personal dialogue can take place in many different settings (e.g., during class, before class, on the playground), but for me, the distant researcher, it had to occur in the letters. Also, in both the reading journals and the letters, Dorothy and I found that the children were more inclined to contribute their own reflections when we shared our thought processes with them. We continue to explore the role of response in literary correspondence. Dorothy, for example, has been investigating how humor in the reading journals indicates an awareness of audience and deflects routine generation of responses.

The letters that you have just read do not convey the full story, but we decided to leave the meat of our story to them in order to offer you

a more anecdotal insight into the nature of our collaboration. In addition to this correspondence, we have had dozens of telephone calls, many of which dwelt on the nature of our collaboration and the role of teachers in conducting research. We sent a variety of materials to each other (e.g., reading journal entries, articles to read, transcripts of interviews, drafts of and responses to our own writing). We have continued to work together and since 1989, when we received an NCTE collaborative research grant, we have focused more on refining our research questions and analyzing the data. We decided to focus on the role of response in literary correspondence between children and adults.

We have written this paper collaboratively. We talked about how we might go about doing it, deciding early on that a dialogue format might be an appropriate way to share our experiences. Dorothy wrote an initial draft, then I revised the piece and returned it to Dorothy for her comments. And so we continued, fashioning the piece that you are now reading. We added excerpts, deleted letters and sections of letters, moved text around, raised issues to which we did not have answers or were not sure whether we needed to address. We negotiated points of discrepancy, lobbying each other when we were committed to a particular point or form. At other times, one person's insight went unquestioned. We talked about whether we needed to add commentary between letter excerpts, decided to try to guide readers with the help of our introductory and concluding letters and the occasional "Dear Reader" note to fill in the gaps. However, it is the letters themselves that we wanted to tell the story of how two educators gradually became collaborative researchers. We hope we have succeeded.

Sincerely,

Katharine Davies Samway

[One year later.]

Dear Reader:

When we originally wrote this series of letters describing our collaboration, we had a hard time deciding whether we should share our research findings with you. Because the volume was devoted to the collaborative aspect of the research, we decided to limit ourselves to that narrow topic. Since then, however, many people who have read our drafts have asked us about the content of our research and what we found out about the role of response in literary correspondence between

children and adults. We hope that the following brief discussion of our findings helps you to better understand our project.

Findings

1. *There was great variation in the types of responses and degrees of investment that the youngsters engaged in. Variations in the youngsters' responses as literary correspondents appeared to be related to how experienced and engaged the students were as readers and writers, as well as how accustomed they were to reflecting on books, writing, and their reading and writing processes.*
2. *Responses were more engaging when both correspondents invested themselves (e.g., including personal information about family members and activities; sharing our own reading or writing processes; or soliciting feedback on a draft). In the case of the letters, there was a marked change in the quality of the students' letters when Katharine revealed herself as a human being (e.g., references to her family and travels) and as a reader and writer (e.g., sharing her writing processes and asking for responses to drafts of her writing). When Dorothy revealed herself as a reader in the reading journals, it appeared to have an effect on the depth of students' responses.*
3. *Adults tended to ask most of the questions. Over time, the students began to ask questions, although the degree to which this occurred varied from student to student. Because questioning tends to be one-sided when teachers and children are interacting (with teachers asking most of the questions), teachers have been urged to avoid asking questions when corresponding with children. However, questions are an integral part of dialogue, and we found it unnatural to avoid asking questions. Even though our questions were always authentic (i.e., we did not ask questions for which we had answers, and we only asked questions for which we were genuinely interested in the children's responses), we did find that we had to be judicious about how many questions we asked. We also needed to balance them with insights into our own thinking, experiences, and processes. When a child asked a question of us, the tenor of correspondence improved greatly.*
4. *Adults and children initiated topics, both literary in nature (in reading journals and letters) and personal (in letters). In the reading journals, the degree to which children initiated topics appeared to be related to their experience and success as readers and writers. In contrast, in the letters, some of the less experienced readers and writers were quite effective at initiating topics and steering the*

content of the letters in directions that interested them. It may be that the children viewed the letters as more open-ended, content-wise.

5. *Both adults and students incorporated into their own writing elements present in their respondents' writing (e.g., salutations in letters, vocabulary, and topics). Although each writer had his or her own identifiable writing style, correspondents tended to pick up features from each other.*

To summarize our findings, we discovered that the success of cross-age (adult/child) literary correspondence depends basically on the same elements found in adult-to-adult correspondence—a willingness to invest oneself and engage with another human being in exploring new avenues of thinking. We have been fortunate to have the opportunity to do just that with each other and with the children participating in the project.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Taylor and Katharine Davies Samway

7 Strengthening Individual Voices through Collaboration

Linda K. Crafton
Chicago, Illinois

Carol Porter
Mundelein High School, Mundelein, Illinois

Introduction (Linda)

For many years, educators were guided in their work by the views of Piaget. Stressing the value of the active individual, educational research and practice were concerned about individuals, often in a vacuum without a strong concern for the social context and relationships within the setting. Not long ago, the sociolinguistics movement and particularly Vygotskian notions of learning began to influence the American educational scene. As a result, teachers, curriculum developers, and educational researchers started paying more attention to the social dimension of learning, so obviously rich in an institution like school. Social ideas have expanded to embrace peer learning, teachers and students learning together, and university researchers and classroom teachers collaborating on research projects of mutual interest. The rationale for collaborative research is at least twofold: when both researchers get to contribute equally, both are enriched, and a synergism occurs that cannot be created by the individual energies of two people, even if they move in similar directions. When Carol Porter and I spent a year together collaborating on an interactive writing project in her classroom, the result for us was, at once, a stronger research team and stronger individuals.

How Did a University Researcher and a Classroom Teacher Get Together? (Linda)

I met Carol when she signed up for one of my summer seminars on writing process. Carol was the student who made herself known by

asking good questions and making insightful comments. The course was an elective in our graduate program and, with balmy weather surrounding and vacations summoning, many students focused more on getting through than getting serious. I noticed Carol because her stance was different. She ignored the call of the season and concentrated intensely on looking for ways to adapt whatever we talked about (often at the elementary school level) to her situation at the junior high.

The following summer, I was pleased to see her walk through the door into my newest seminar on reading/writing connections. Now she had a year of process-based instruction under her belt. This time she came with new strengths but with even more questions, ready to be challenged and to challenge me in a different way.

In the meantime, I had become more and more intrigued with the small but growing group of researchers doing ethnographic research in a natural setting. There was also a changing view of teachers as co-researchers that held infinite appeal for me. As a university teacher-researcher, I realized my professional strengths now came from a different source and that classroom teachers brought an essential perspective to our understanding of the learning dynamic in the classroom. I started looking for a serious-minded teacher who was interested in making her classroom more process-based and student-centered—one who might be willing to make the kind of commitment to me, to herself, and to her students that I knew this kind of exploration would take. I did not have to look far. By the end of the summer course, I knew Carol was my first choice, and when she signed up for my fall semester linguistics class, I approached her about the possibility of doing collaborative research together.

How Did We Decide on Our Research Focus? (Linda)

The same summer Carol was taking her second seminar with me, I spent three days at a small conference listening to Shirley Brice Heath talk about "intelligent writing." She described the writing of students in a Basic English classroom in Texas where learners participated as an audience community during one academic year. The primary form of reading/writing was letters to Heath in California. She had invited these Texas students to become "associates" with her as she pursued her interests as an ethnographer of communication in diverse communities (see Heath, 1985, for a complete description). This was one of those "miracle" studies that made you want to cheer at the dramatic

transformation in the participants. The majority of the students had been special education lifers with few experiences in reading and writing extended discourse and even fewer opportunities to glimpse their potential as literate human beings.

This particular study dovetailed with my own interests in authentic literacy experiences in the classroom and the importance of metalinguistic awareness in developing language proficiency. I was also struck by the immediate prestige this project conferred on students who had low status in the intellectual community of schools.

These were general ideas I presented excitedly to Carol one evening after a linguistics class. (She told me later she thought I had asked her to stay after class because she had done something wrong.) I proposed a study similar to Heath's in which students would become long-distance correspondents, writing me both personal letters and accounts of their language studies. I explained that I was interested in finding a classroom teacher with whom I could work to implement a collaborative research study that would allow students to engage in genuine reading/writing experiences. I told her that it was important that these concepts mesh with her goals, that it would take a major time commitment, and that, while the philosophical framework was in place, we would have to work out the details along the way. Carol listened quietly for a long time and then told me that this was something she had been searching for and that she knew exactly which of her classes it would benefit the most.

Carol and I did not start out as "collaboratively" as we would if we were embarking on a new research project now—part of what we learned about the process of collaboration. The initial shape of our research clearly belonged to me. However, from its conception, it was a project of mutual interest, and Carol's input into the shaping of subsequent research questions and modifications and extensions of the project itself were substantial. Beyond the first step, we were a team.

Who Were the Students and What Were Our Questions? (Linda)

Prior to their encounter with Carol, the seventeen junior high school students involved in our research had been in academic worlds that were carefully and narrowly sculpted in the spirit of behaviorism. These students had spent years drilling on skills and filling in spaces on worksheets. Like Heath and Branscombe, we assumed that their

literacy abilities were limited by the few opportunities they had had to engage in genuine literate thought. While these students were with Carol only one fifty-minute class period per day, the rest of their curriculum remained narrowly focused on deficit remediation—all content classes (math, science, etc.) were decelerated, and the students were also enrolled in a separate class for either Chapter 1 or LD Resource. At the end of the nine months of our project, we observed critical changes in these students' literate behavior and their views of themselves as users of written language. In this project, they were responsible colleagues who paid attention to detail and who were concerned about the effectiveness of their communication.

At the beginning of the project, our research question was general. Could we see a positive change in students, socially and academically, if they were writing for real purposes with the guarantee of an audience and a response? Would personal language study increase students' ability to *use* language? As we moved through the year, our questions became more defined:

1. Would the level and quality of involvement in writing change? How?
2. Would students engage in more extended writing than they had prior to the research?
3. Would their attitudes about themselves as learners change? In what ways?

Carol and I tracked changes, looked for patterns, and analyzed data throughout the year. We met in my office at the university twice a week to deliver and exchange letters, discuss and interpret field notes (primarily classroom interactions in relation to the written documents), and to plan (Watson, Burke, & Harste, 1988) the language studies I would suggest to the students. Because the students showed little interest and engagement in traditional curricular activities, one area Carol and I wanted to explore was the level and quality of involvement in the language study projects. We considered involvement from three different perspectives: sensitivity to audience, initiation of topic, and willingness to sustain engagement. We saw substantial growth in each of these areas as evidenced by an increase in supplying me with background information when discussing a topic or situation with which I had little or no experience; introducing ideas that were not previously mentioned in any other communication; and maintaining the topic of discussion *across* letters.

What Did the Research Look Like? (Carol)

Cycles of personal and research letters between my low-track eighth-grade language arts students and Linda began on October 2, 1985, when my class received their first letter from Linda introducing them to the project and inviting them to participate in it (appendix A).

Personal Letters

In the personal letter exchanges with individual students, Linda wrote genuine responses to the interests and activities of each student and shared her life and experiences with them. These personal letters continued throughout the school year with approximately two exchanges each month. Since the personal letters were meant to be private, class discussion was not a planned component of the writing process. Many students shared their letters with each other through self-initiated exchanges, and occasionally students would tell the whole class about portions of their letters. Some students wrote back to Linda privately, while others shared their responses informally with classmates before sending their final drafts.

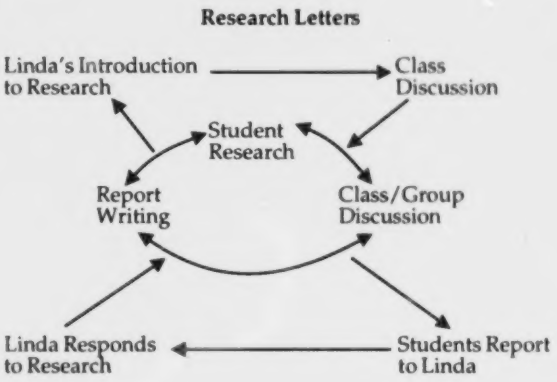
Language Studies

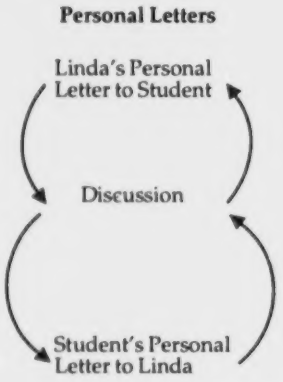
While the personal letters were being exchanged, the students were also conducting language studies (figure 1). They completed three, two of which were reflective activities. The studies were presented to the students through a group letter from Linda which introduced the students to the form of language they would be studying, gave examples, posed questions, and suggested directions they could take in gathering and reporting data (appendix B).

After reading these letters, we had a class discussion. Our talk ranged from defining words in the letter to determining equipment that would be needed to conduct the investigations. As the students became involved in the actual research, they began to see that their learning was enhanced and supported through social exchanges as they encountered stumbling blocks, experienced frustrations, generated new questions, discovered new information, and considered alternative directions for gathering and analyzing data.

Throughout the year, the students wrote all their research letters first in rough draft form. These letters (which started out looking like personal letters, but took the form of reports by the end of the school year) were then taken to authors' circles, where small groups came together to share writing and receive feedback for revisions. This was

Figure 1. Student-conducted language studies.





*Research Topics

1. A study of one teacher's oral language.
2. A reflection on their own use of written language.
3. A comparison/contrast of job-related reading and writing for two people.

a dynamic time for these students, as they carefully listened to the writing of their classmates and then provided encouragement and made suggestions for improving the writing. After the authors' circles, students revised their writing and prepared a final copy for Linda.

The students first investigated the oral language of their teachers. Three reports from each student were written to Linda in the first months of the project.

Midway through the school year we asked the students to step back and reflect on their own use of language. We photocopied the personal and research letters they had written to Linda and physically spread them out so that the students could consider the changes that had occurred in their writing and thinking. Each student then wrote a research letter to Linda, reporting what he or she had discovered about their changes as learners. (These changes are discussed in the section of this essay entitled "What Impact Did the Research Have?")

The final language study the students conducted focused on job-related reading and writing tasks. Each student interviewed two people from different professions, gathered reading and writing samples, and in several cases, observed workers on the job. The literacy demands of the two workers were then compared and contrasted in a research letter (report) to Linda.

We asked the students to reflect on their learning one more time when Linda came into the classroom several weeks before graduation. It was the first time they had met their long-distance correspondent. Two class periods were set aside for large-group discussion and personal conferencing. On the last day of school, the students received their farewell letter from Linda.

What Did We Discover? (Linda)

The personal letters provided an opportunity for extended discourse on a particular topic—a higher-quality experience systematically denied to this group of learners (Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991). Extended commentaries occurred sometimes in relation to self-initiated topics, sometimes in relation to issues I had raised in my letters. The language studies not only provided opportunities for increased linguistic awareness in familiar contexts, but also for protracted oral discussions (language about language) and the opportunity to organize information in a more traditional scientific manner. In both forums, the personal letters and the research studies, students who were known for incomplete work and short attention spans stayed with

their activity until it was completed satisfactorily from *their* perspective. And they voluntarily discussed their personal letters and their language research.

We noticed that students very quickly assumed a "writing voice" (Moffett, 1981) and moved from more egocentric speech to an awareness of audience in social interactions (Vygotsky, 1978). In early letters, I often asked students to clarify confusing ideas or conceptual relationships. I let them know what I expected as a reader of their writing. Because students started providing more background information and restating topics from my previous letters, there was a decrease in the number of questions I needed to ask to clarify their statements (from an average of one question per letter in the first three exchanges to none in the last three letters at the end of the year).

Carol and I looked for a shift in our co-researchers' typically passive stance in relation to school activities. We could first see the change anecdotally and then could document it across written artifacts. While we completed whole-group analyses in a number of different areas, we targeted two students, Brian and Linda Q., as potential case studies.

Brian and Linda Q. were representative of many of the students in Carol's class. Brian was the extreme case of the uninvolved student, and he was noticeably withdrawn socially. Sitting at his desk at the side of the room, Brian's posture revealed a painful need to maintain anonymity in a room he seemed to perceive as hostile. If he tried to contribute during a group discussion, he was ridiculed severely. At the beginning of the school year, Brian completed no work and never brought any materials to class. He was one of many in the classroom who were emotionally immature.

Linda Q. represented every class member to some degree. Her school career was paved with failures; her literacy development was limited. Linda Q. had learned to channel her lack of success and her feelings of inadequacy into violent outbursts. In the seventh grade, she was known as a bully and did not hesitate to pick fights with boys as well as girls.

By the end of the year, Brian had assumed a more socially prominent place in the classroom by voluntarily taking a desk in the middle of the room. He had slowly changed his classmates' perception of him by making worthwhile and serious contributions to the discussions surrounding the language studies. He believed his ideas were valuable and the setting in which they were received worthwhile. With me, he was an engaged correspondent, asking me questions and inviting me

to think along with him as he posed hypothetical situations ("I wonder what would happen if . . . ").

Linda Q. changed more dramatically than any other student in the class. Carol was using dyads and small groups as well as whole-class interactions to encourage the sharing of language observations and interpretations. Linda Q. became a leader in many of these groups, monitoring when she felt it was necessary to spur her classmates on and to accomplish whatever task they had set for themselves. Most impressive was the award Linda Q. received at the end of the year. The same principal who just the year before had described her as "nonconformist" and "academically poor" honored her with the Principal's Award—an honor given to the one eighth-grade student who makes the greatest social and academic changes during the school year.

Passivity gave way to active initiation—in the students' classroom discussions and in their writing. We observed a general growth in students' willingness to initiate topics. In the first letter, only five students out of seventeen initiated a new topic; by the end of the year, we observed an average of three new topics in the letters. Topics the students initiated centered on extracurricular activities (both in and out of school), family issues (especially when broken homes were involved), and personal questions to me.

As the students' topic initiation increased, so did their extended commentaries. Linda Q., for example, began interviewing me, in her letters, about being a teacher: "How did you get interested in teaching? How many years do you have to attend college to become a teacher? Does it depend on what you want to take up? I guess you really should know what you want to do with your life before you go to college, huh? If this is personal to answer then please don't answer it. What did you do when you left teaching for a while? Do you have to have any special average to even become a teacher?" Interspersed between her questions were long musings about wanting to be on the student council and what grade level she might like to teach. As Linda Q. and her classmates wrote more, we also observed increased continuity within and across letters, marked by reference to prior topics or the surfacing of cohesive ties (Halliday & Hasan, 1976) and by more complicated syntax in the extended writing.

On two occasions, the eighth graders evaluated their own growth. They questioned how far they had come as writers and researchers between September and May. As a result of their self-assessments, they noticed that (1) when they initiated a topic or were interested in one I had raised, they were willing to write more; (2) they

increasingly put more detail in both their personal and research letters; (3) they wanted to work on these projects before they did anything else because they knew they would get a "real" response; (4) they were more willing to talk about their ideas and to problem-solve with each other (e.g., wondering together about the vocabulary and ideas presented in my letters, questioning the various functions of language in different contexts); and (5) they wanted their writing to "make sense" (as evidenced by a greater willingness to reread their writing and by the increasing number of in-process revisions they made beyond the single-word level).

What Problems Did We Encounter? (Carol)

On one cold, snowy Saturday in February, after five hours of analyzing the growth of our students (and several calls to our respective homes to say we needed just one more hour), one of us turned to the other and said, "Is it worth it?"

The other replied, "I was just wondering the same thing."

Two relieved sighs and ear-shattering laughter broke the silence of the university hallways. Time is always a precious commodity, one that has made us doubt our decisions when we found the strings pulling us in too many directions. When our laughter died away on that memorable day, we both agreed that if it were not for the other person to whom we had committed, we would have pulled out of the project. Neither of us had just ourselves to answer to, so if one of us gave up, she would be letting the other person down. It's possible that the most valuable lessons we learned from our collaborative efforts had to do with time, support, and commitment, all of which came to the surface on that day.

It became important for us to reflect on our professional growth throughout the project. We came to realize that we had made tremendous strides in our learning about teaching, literacy development, and authentic curricular experiences. In essence, the support we were able to offer each other had actually saved us time—together we were able to move beyond any point we could have reached in isolation.

Dealing with the enormous time demands was not the only problem. Writing seventeen personal letters every two weeks, as well as writing and responding to research letters within the same time period, was a major undertaking for Linda. One solution to this prob-

lem was a shift from individual research letters to group letters with each student's contribution to the research identified in sections of the letter.

We were also perplexed about students who, for various reasons, chose not to respond to Linda's letters. We decided to deal with this problem as we would in "real life"—to write one more letter to the reluctant student, but then shift the responsibility to the student for writing back.

Another problem we encountered was the students' preference for the personal letter writing over the research portion of the project. We felt this was to be expected, given the class of students we had chosen for the research. The personal letters were apparently filling a more immediate need for them. We also speculated on a problem we had created when we set up the initial language studies without giving the students any choices; we decided that their voices needed to be heard in the planning of the research. When Linda and I were ready to plan for the reading research, for example, we began by asking the students how they might be able to study this topic. Once the students became more involved in planning how they would conduct the research and who they would gather their information from, their involvement increased.

As my role within the classroom changed from observer to participant during the research, process observations became more difficult to gather. No longer was I quietly sitting in the corner, jotting down the changes I was seeing in student behavior. I was involved in discussions, and by the end of the project I was writing my own research report on the final language study that focused on job-related reading and writing tasks. We tried audiotapes, but the sound quality was poor, and trying to tape the whole class was impossible. The best solution I found for this problem was writing key words on a sheet of paper during the class period. That evening I would reflect on and write about the exchanges that took place during the day.

What Happened to Me as a Teacher-Researcher in the Classroom? (Carol)

When Linda and I began our collaboration, I had not seen the label "teacher-researcher" in print. My notion of a researcher was a university person who gathered an overwhelming amount of statistical data and reported the findings. I saw the value of this as being limited to other university people who had the energy and know-how to under-

stand such research. Occasionally, the findings might have an impact on classroom teachers, if they heard about it in a graduate class through a university person who happened to believe that the study was conducted without too many flaws.

With this as my notion of research, it's no wonder that when my students received their first letters from Linda, I sat back and tried to take a neutral, "objective" stance. I was afraid I might "spoil" the findings if I interacted with the "subjects." I wrote about what the students were doing and saying, then reported this "useless" information to Linda each week when we met. Ellis and Steve shaking their hands from writer's cramp and Mike writing legibly for the first time because he finally cared if someone could read what he had to say didn't seem like data to me.

I cannot pinpoint exactly when I began to see my role change from bystander-reporter to teacher-researcher, but as I reflect on this, I feel that two factors had a major impact on this change. First, being able to share classroom anecdotes and insights with Linda became as valuable to our learning as the written artifacts the students were providing. There were times, for example, when I saw little growth in a student's writing but had observed that same student discussing his writing for the first time with someone else and moving from an isolated seat at the back of the room to one more central to other students. Second, my process observations were integral to our understanding of student learning and the supporting curriculum that we later developed. Both of these factors contributed to the changes in my role within the research setting.

My earlier stance caused the students to struggle alone through their first research letter, even though in all other portions of my curriculum I had been attempting to engage students in creating meaning through social interaction (literature discussions and authors' circles). It became much easier on all of us when I began to facilitate their learning in the context of this research project with the same support systems they had come to rely on in other areas.

Further, when I was playing the bystander-reporter role, I was not viewing the research project as a part of the curriculum. It was an add-on, something that I valued as a learning experience, but nothing that could ever be written up in a district curriculum guide. A turning point came for me when the students held a "strike" against the "real" learning experiences that I had planned for them. On this particular day, they knew I had their letters from Linda, but we had a mystery story that I felt they needed to finish reading first, before I gave them

Linda's letters. When I would not give them their letters, they decided they would not read the mystery! Left without much of a choice, I finally relented.

I am glad I listened to them on that day rather than feeling I needed to win. After all, if the curricular goal was to help them become better readers, their letters could obviously accomplish that goal. As these students taught me to value authentic learning experiences, I began to look for ways to provide similar activities for my other language arts classes.

By the end of the school year I, too, was involved in the research as a learner. When the students interviewed employees and gathered samples of job-related reading/writing demands, I gathered data on my spouse's job and then compared and contrasted my findings to the literacy demands of a teacher. I was beginning to see myself as another learner in the classroom, not simply as a facilitator who learns through the research of others.

What Impact Did the Research Have?

Carol

I now view classroom research as a major component of good teaching, and I continue to do research with other teachers and with my students. For example, during the past year, one of my students and I investigated collaboration and wrote "Learning through Inquiry: A Teacher and Student Collaboration," an article celebrating our learning. And over the past two years, I have collaborated with another teacher in my department to teach the potential that portfolios have for learning.

My traditional view of the teacher-student relationship has changed. As a student of Linda's, I saw myself as the one gaining knowledge from her expertise. But Linda helped me to discover that I was as valuable to her learning as she was to mine. My strengths and her strengths are not the same; at one time, I viewed that difference as my not measuring up. Today I see both our strengths and weaknesses as necessities for collaboration. We have each gained from the other, and our learning has moved beyond where either of us could have been individually.

Gradually, I have become more confident in my writing and speaking abilities. Ironically, this was a goal of the research project for the students, but I seem to have gained the most in these areas. In 1985

I wrote stories for my children, who were a year and a half and five years old, respectively. They were a safe and accepting audience. The research Linda and I did provided me with opportunities to write and speak to audiences that I would have backed away from fearfully in the past. The snowballing effect occurred as this project led to another which involved me in still more speaking and writing. I am now a better writer and public speaker, but beyond this, as I have reflected on my own processes, frustrations, and fears, I have become a better teacher.

It has taken a long time for me to accept, but I realize that I will never have all the answers when it comes to learning and teaching—and that means I will never be finished with my research. Several years ago, I thought that the answers to all my questions were out there, not too far beyond my grasp—if I would just work a little harder in my classroom and finish my degree, I would "get there," and then I wouldn't have any more questions nagging at me. Before, the idea that questions which get answered do themselves generate new questions would have been very unsettling, but today I see that idea as an exciting challenge.

Linda

When Carol talks about her increased confidence and professionalism, I think of the new respect I have, not only for her, but for any classroom teacher who approaches teaching with the same commitment to discovery and exploration. When I told Carol I was looking for a teacher with whom to collaborate, I did not know the full extent or the value of the contribution she would eventually make. I watched her slow transformation and marveled at her increasing ability to observe significant details in her classroom, in herself, and in her students. I guess, in the end, though, it was her devotion that impressed me the most. For her students and for herself (and, yes, because of her commitment to me), she increased the time she spent on an already overly scheduled professional life and decreased her precious family time—all in the name of educational research and new understanding. During this year, she joined the slowly growing ranks of teacher-researchers who reach out beyond themselves and their classrooms to contribute to the profession at large. She forever changed my view of classroom teachers.

Along with my view of teachers, my understanding of the conduct of inquiry also changed. This study required a different kind of intellectual effort. Its power resided in our ability to continually take different stances on the students, their learning, and our collaborative

decisions. My questioning of traditional research paradigms occurred long before I invited Carol to team up with me on this project. I understood reading and writing as complex, culturally situated processes, and while I could talk about the development and systematic observation of those processes within the classroom culture, this study led to a new appreciation of those complexities and of the nature of this kind of research. As a result of our project, Carol and I confirmed some predictions, gained some new insights, but most important, developed a new understanding of the value of qualitative research: It is a method of inquiry that raises as many questions as it answers. In that way, what Kaplan (1964) says is true: "Neither means nor ends are absolute: the end sought is not an ultimate destination but a temporary resting place" (p. 116). The technical end of this collaborative research year (I am sure there will be others) was not an end at all but simply a transition that gave us time to catch our breath before starting down a new path of inquiry influenced by the one we had just traveled.

Strong Voices (Linda)

Carol and I have moved on to other research and pedagogical explorations since we completed this work together. When we reflect on this year, it is clear that we were enriched immeasurably by the experience. The students—our co-researchers, of course—have moved on as well. Linda Q. is in college in a teacher preparatory program, and Brian works in a shoe store while he attends the local community college.

During our research study, the students and I did not set eyes on one another until May, after the last letters were written. (I did follow up with one last letter after I met them to let them know I had had a baby girl a week or so later.) The complex growth that we observed occurred through a natural need to maintain a social relationship—"one of the primary reasons writing in the real world occurs: when direct face-to-face interaction or oral verbal communication by telephone is not possible" (Heath, 1985, p. 16).

Brian started his first letter to me in this way:

> Dear Linda
>
> Hi, My name is Brian W. I have very terrible handwriting. Do you do any research in handwriting? If you do, can you help me out?

He ended this letter by saying: "I can't wait till you next letter comes." Early in our correspondence, we started talking about books we had read in the past that we liked. Later, we shifted to books we

were reading currently. Our literary talk was the hallmark of our exchanges over the months. Brian's later letters looked markedly different as he shared the details of his reading and asked insightful questions about mine. The handwriting issue (maybe never the real issue) seemed to be forgotten. In one of his final letters to me, he reflected on our year together, what he had noticed about himself, and the significant things about the research from his perspective:

> Another thing I noticed is when I talk about something I am interested in, I will write a page long, I won't tell you my friends name or why I was afraid because I thought you couldn't read my handwriting. Now, I know two people can read my handwrighting.
>
> See you Soon. Brian

Together, we all achieved stronger voices.

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Appendix A

October 2, 1985

HI!

I guess by the time you receive this first letter from me, Mrs. Porter will have told you something about why I'm writing.

I am a professor at a university in Chicago—it's called Northeastern Illinois University (in fact, your teacher has taken some classes with me here). I've been a teacher here for five years. I didn't like it so much at first, but now I really do.

One of the things that professors do besides teach is research. Research basically means trying to gather some information about something and then organizing the information in such a way as to discover something new. You already do research all of the time but you probably never call it that. For example, if a new student moves into your school and you want to get to know him/her, you probably ask them specific questions about where they are from, what their other school was like, how they like your school, etc. That's gathering information (researchers call it data). Then if you decide to tell someone else about this new person, you have to organize what you know as you are speaking or they won't understand what you are saying. In the process of doing all of this, you've learned something new.

I do most of my research in language—reading and writing and speaking. In fact, that's exactly why I'm writing to you—I'd like to invite all of you to become researchers with me this year. I would like to know about *your* reading and writing and speaking and you are certainly the experts in that area! I'm also interested in the reading, writing and speaking of people you know—like your family or other students in your school. This kind of research will be a little more systematic than the kind that you usually do informally on your own.

So, you have all of this great information I would like to have and you could be of great help to me, but there's another part of this. Your reading and writing are likely to improve a tremendous amount as you are doing this research with me. That's because there will be a lot of reading and writing going on between us and, because, as you are collecting all of this information, you will be *thinking* a lot about reading and writing in the process. One ninth-grade class did the same kind of thing with a researcher in Texas and their reading and writing improved immensely! Together I think we can learn a lot from each other this year.

First of all, I think maybe we should get to know each other a little better. I am 34 years old and I'm married. My husband's name is Paul. I'm originally from southern Indiana, a small town named Hanover. Actually, I'm not even from that small town; I grew up a few miles outside of it in the country. We didn't live on a farm but there were many farms around. I have two brothers and two sisters. They still live close to Hanover and I miss them since I moved to Chicago. Have you ever had to move away from someone you were close to?

When I was growing up I used to spend as much time as possible on my grandparents farm. They had this great barn and we (my brothers and sisters and I) used to spend hours swinging on the tires and landing in the hay. My grandparents also had a lot of animals on the farm. My only bad memory of being on their farm was the day I was flogged by their rooster. He used to strut around just waiting for someone to invade his territory and, when they did, he flew at them. I was pretty young when that happened. Afterwards, I made sure I stayed as far away from him as I could get.

I remember junior high school (grades 7 and 8) as a great time in my life. I went to a very small school and so I knew all of the kids in my class. Of course, I had my own group of friends and we didn't pay much attention to people who were not in our clique. What is 8th grade like so far for you?

After I graduated from high school, I went to college in another small town (I just couldn t get away from them) in Indiana—Evansville. I think college was one of the best times in my life. I loved getting away from my parents and being on my own. Do you have plans to go to college? If not, what do you plan to do after high school?

Well, I taught elementary and junior high students in reading for a few years and then I decided to go back to college to get my doctorate in reading. After that, I came to Chicago, and, well, you know the rest.

I am really looking forward to working with you this year. When you write back to me please tell me about you and also tell me what you think about my research idea. I promise to answer each one of your letters (although they might be shorter than this one!) and any of your questions. We'll get started on the real research next time around.

Sincerely,

Dr. Linda Crafton

Appendix B

October 11, 1985

Hi, Everyone!

So, we're ready to begin our research! I've been thinking a lot about the first thing we might like to do and it seems that considering how people around you speak would be a good way to begin to observe and to think about language.

Everybody around you talks, but people speak in very different ways. They also use their speech to accomplish different purposes. For example, when I first met my mother-in-law, who is from New York, I was a little intimidated by her speech. She's a very bright woman and is quite articulate. She speaks in rather long sentences and tends to clip her words off at the end abruptly as she speaks. Many times, at the end of trying to get a particular idea across, she will begin her last sentence with: "The point of all this is . . . " and then she will summarize everything she has said in one sentence. Her language is quite formal most of the time. Instead of saying something like, "Yeh, I know what you mean," she will say, "Yes, you have made your point precisely—I understand *exactly* what you mean." Most of the time it seems that she is using her speech to explore ideas out loud or to communicate an opinion that she already has. She is, however, also a very good listener. I have some wonderful conversations with her when we visit. When we talk, she listens very attentively and then responds to what I have been saying so that I know clearly that she has been listening to me.

In contrast to my mother-in-law is a college student who works in our department at the university. He talks in ways that are almost the opposite

from my mother-in-law. His speech is very slow with one word sliding over easily into another. He speaks in short sentences that are usually either confirmations of what he has been asked to do, like: "Ok, I'll have this done for you tomorrow" or questions like: "Do you want this on your desk or in your mailbox." He, too, is a very good listener, but I've never really had a conversation with him. By and large, he only uses his speech when I'm around to help him get his work done.

Now, on to some people you may want to observe. I thought it would be interesting if you listened closely to a few of your teachers at Carl Sandburg to see how they talk and what their language is like. If you choose two or three teachers who speak very differently, and observe them for a couple of days, you'll be able to figure out what makes their language so different. You might want to get a small notebook so you can write down some specific examples of their speech (either during or after class). That way you can take a close look at the kind of words that they use, the kinds of sentences they use, how they organize their speech and for what reasons do they usually talk (to give directions, to discuss ideas, etc.).

Once you collect your information, it would probably be a good idea to get together with some people in your class who decided to observe the same people so you can discuss your findings before you write back to me to tell me what you have found about how differently these teachers talk.

Good Luck!

Linda Crafton

8 Learning to Do Research Together

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In retrospect, the story of how our three lives crossed and came together is germane to understanding how we learned to do research together. If we were to begin with the awarding of a National Council of Teachers of English collaborative research grant to Richard (Rick) Umpleby and Donna Alvermann in the spring of 1989 to study how students attempt to make sense of Rick's instruction, the account of our collaboration would be incomplete. Such an accounting would leave out the earlier research projects in which Rick participated, but in which he was the subject of the research rather than a co-researcher. It would also leave out the working relationship that had developed between Jim Olson and Donna long before the collaborative research project was proposed by Rick and Donna.

Consequently, we begin the chapter with a description of how our collaborative project developed, particularly in terms of how it evolved from Rick and Donna's earlier work and how Jim came to be included. Also in this section is a brief summary of the project's objectives, questions, and methods. Next, we provide a detailed analysis of how several factors—common purpose, autonomy, incentive, trust, shared vision, and diversity—influenced the outcome of the research. Finally, we conclude with some reflections on the collaborative process and recommendations that may have implications for others who are interested in doing a similar kind of work.

Evolution of the Research Project

A diversity of experiences led to our eventual collaboration. In the spring of 1982, Donna, who is presently a professor at the University

of Georgia, was a visiting scholar at Michigan State University's Institute for Research on Teaching. While there, she observed firsthand the richness of collaborative research projects that involved teacher-researchers working together with university researchers. Shortly after moving to Georgia, Donna met Rick, a high school English teacher in rural Georgia, who volunteered to participate in one of the first studies she conducted as a new assistant professor at the university. Rick's earlier teaching experiences in the Peace Corps, coupled with his open and inquiring approach to education, made him a natural research partner. Jim, who was a graduate student at the University of Georgia when the project was funded, brought to the project eighteen years of teaching experience in grades 7–9 in a predominantly white, middle-class suburban district outside of Minneapolis-St. Paul. Jim's previous teaching experience in a setting that was quite different from Rick's provided a different lens through which to view Rick's predominantly black ninth-grade students who came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Earlier Research Involving Rick and Donna

Approximately six years ago, Rick and Donna became acquainted during a six-month intervention study in which Donna and a colleague, David Hayes, examined the role of teacher-directed classroom discussions in promoting students' comprehension of assigned readings (Alvermann & Hayes, 1989). Rick was one of the teachers in that study. Three years later, Rick participated in another study Donna conducted on classroom discussion. In each of these two studies, however, Rick's role was more that of a subject than a co-researcher.

In retrospect, one particular study was probably the catalyst that led to Rick and Donna's eventual collaboration as co-researchers. That study, a microethnography of Rick's classroom, was conducted by Deborah Dillon, who at the time was a doctoral student with Donna at the University of Georgia. Dillon's (1989) study piqued Rick's curiosity in, and respect for, qualitative research. Consequently, when Donna approached Rick shortly thereafter about his interest in writing an NCTE collaborative research proposal that would be qualitative in nature, Rick agreed that it sounded like a good idea.

Jim Joins Rick and Donna on the Project

Although neither Rick nor Donna knew it at the time the grant was awarded by NCTE, two major events were to shape the project they had proposed. First, prior to the start of data collection in the fall of

1989, Rick would leave his teaching position at a nearby high school for a new ninth-grade English teaching position, some 100 miles from the University of Georgia. Second, Jim Olson would return to graduate school in the University of Georgia's Department of Reading Education, where Donna taught. Jim's return, as a third-year doctoral student, followed a year's absence from Georgia in which he taught ninth-grade English in Stillwater, Minnesota, as part of a sabbatical agreement with his former school district. These two events—Rick's move and Jim's return to graduate school—were instrumental in shaping the course our collaboration took.

Rick's move to a site more than 100 miles from the University of Georgia necessitated finding a graduate research assistant who could take turns with Donna in making the drive to the high school at least two (and sometimes three or more) times a week. The collaboration depended on frequent classroom observations. Although Rick participated equally in the planning, data collection, and analysis of the data, he could not be expected to take field notes while simultaneously teaching students. Hence, Jim was invited to serve as a third member of the collaborative research team, with the same responsibilities for data collection and data analysis as Rick and Donna.

Jim and Donna had known one another in graduate school at Syracuse University as far back as the late 1970s, when Donna was finishing her doctoral program and Jim was enrolled in a master's program. During their years at Syracuse, Donna and Jim had worked together on several projects, although none of them involved the degree of collaboration demanded by the present project. Still, Jim's ability to bring a different perspective to oral and written language instruction, plus his interest in effective teaching (the topic of his dissertation), made him a valuable addition to the research team.

Project's Objectives, Questions, and Methods

Rick and Donna's decision to write a proposal for an NCTE collaborative research grant grew out of their interest in exploring the meaning lower-track students attached to Rick's oral and written language instruction. They were particularly interested in finding answers to the following questions:

1. What is the relationship of discussion to writing in the learning and teaching of literature?
2. What sociocultural and political influences shape this relationship?

3. Does talk during the writing conference influence whole-class discussion and vice versa?
4. Do patterns of talk among lower-track English students vary when discussions occur during small-group writing conferences with their peers as opposed to one-on-one writing conferences with their teacher?

Originally, Rick and Donna had planned to observe students writing and talking in small groups, in whole-class discussion, and in one-on-one conferences with Rick. As the year progressed, however, it became increasingly apparent that the social and emotional immaturity of the students in Rick's ninth-grade lower-track English class, coupled with Rick's sense of being the new teacher on the block, would preclude most of the small-group work and one-on-one conferences that were planned initially. Consequently, data were collected largely from whole-class discussion of assigned readings, although there were some exceptions to this pattern.

Interpretive, participant observational fieldwork was the method we used in collecting and analyzing the data (Erickson, 1986). It involved long-term participant observation, the collection of evidence through field notes, transcriptions of videotaped and audiotaped lessons, interviews, and documentary evidence (e.g., students' work, teacher-prepared materials, academic records). We analyzed the data using Glaser and Strauss's (1967) constant comparative method. We also wrote narrative vignettes, theoretical memos, and detailed descriptions of what we observed. Following a pattern of reporting recommended by Erickson (1986), we stated assertions based on key linkages derived from the data sources and supported by analogous instances within the corpus of data.

Influential Factors in the Collaboration

According to Clemson (1990), several factors are critical to the success of any collaborative research project: common purpose, autonomy, incentive, trust, shared vision, and a representative diversity among the researchers. In addressing each of these factors in relation to the goals we set for our own collaboration, we explain how we succeeded, as well as how we may have fallen short of our goals.

Common Purpose

Having a common purpose—learning to do research together—was a factor that turned out to be very important to our collaboration. Donna

and Rick had planned the study and had secured funding for its implementation prior to Jim's arrival on the scene. Both had worked together on research projects in the past. As the graduate research assistant assigned to work with Donna and Rick, Jim understood his role initially to be one of data gatherer and coder, with additional responsibilities for offering suggestions that would facilitate both the progress of the research and the interpretation of the findings. Eventually, Jim assisted as a full-fledged participant observer and interpreter of the data.

Donna and Jim had numerous opportunities to discuss the project during their drives from campus to the research site—approximately two and a half hours each way. They were candid in their talk, taking notes and brainstorming ideas while one or the other of them drove. They were careful not to make decisions without first consulting Rick, but admittedly it was easy for them to talk things through during the long rides, and they took advantage of that situation. In that way, they were able to make suggestions about the research to Rick or to ask questions of him that were thought out, as well as those questions that were more spontaneous. Rick was involved in all decisions, and he always shared fully in the gist of our conversations when we were in joint conferences. The three of us each carried our fair share of the work and operated as equals during the study. At the same time, we were dependent on each other, in our different roles, for satisfying the goals of the research. As Porter (1990) has pointed out, the expertise the university researcher brings to the study in terms of knowledge of research methodology and perspective must be complemented by the extensive knowledge of practice brought to the study by the classroom teacher.

Autonomy

The second factor critical to the success of a collaborative research project is autonomy. Within the confines of the grant itself, we all appreciated a sense of autonomy. We knew there were some restrictions on what we could and could not do. We also knew we were working with deadlines, but there was not a higher authority directing the three of us. We addressed the inconsistencies in the data that we were gathering and shared our personal concerns about the directions that the study appeared to be taking. For example, when it became obvious that small-group peer conferences were not working well, we found alternative structures for studying the meaning students made of Rick's oral and written instruction. One of those alternative struc-

tures involved students in a week-long, role-playing activity. Thus, we exercised autonomy in redirecting the research when it appeared we were drifting from our stated objectives.

Certain procedures used in analyzing the data facilitated our autonomy. For example, we developed a procedure for continuously analyzing field notes and transcriptions of videotaped lessons while separated from one another either by distance or time. This procedure involved the use of an 8 1/2" x 11" paper folded accordion-style in three equal parts, which we called a trifold. Each of our names headed one of the three front parts of a trifold and indicated space reserved for independent interpretive commentaries of a particular event from our field notes or transcribed videotapes. The backside of a trifold was reserved for reconciling differences among our three commentaries and for recording key linkages (Erickson, 1986) among incoming data. For each observed class period, we would independently select an event in a transcript that seemed particularly relevant to our guiding questions. We would record and interpret this event in the part of a trifold reserved for our individual commentaries. Then, the other two researchers would read the same transcribed event and render their interpretations of it. Finally, the researcher who had initially selected and analyzed the event was given a chance to reconcile all subsequent interpretations of the event and to look for key linkages among similarly recorded events. The use of trifolds helped to preserve our autonomy as researchers because we each did our own, and we did not compare notes until all were done.

Although we were cognizant of the fact that, in the end, we would arrive at answers to our questions and complete the study, there were times when it seemed as though we were working from different agendas, especially when it became obvious that we would be unable to answer all of our original questions. Although Clemson (1990) suggested that unresolved conflicting agendas pose a serious threat to the success of collaborative research projects, we never experienced a breakdown in interpersonal communication. When we felt something was not working, felt confused, or felt that a suggested idea would not work, we simply discussed the problem among ourselves. We were careful to ensure that such discussions were three-way, that we identified the basis of the problem to the best of our ability, and that a workable solution was put forth and monitored.

The degree of autonomy each of us felt ultimately came into play as we sat down and tried to comprehend what we found at the conclusion of the project. We drew our own assertions, based on the

data, and in the end selected those assertions the three of us felt were best substantiated by the different data sources. We shared in the process of generating the assertions, each of us maintaining a separate but equal role.

Incentive

The third factor critical to the success of collaborative research is having the appropriate incentive for doing the research. In Jim's case, perhaps a hidden agenda was his personal research interest in the area of teacher effectiveness. He hoped there might be a way that he could use the results of the collaborative research project to explain some of his dissertation findings. Jim was also interested in learning more about qualitative research, and he saw the project as a context in which to gain hands-on experience under the guidance of someone like Donna, who had done previous work in that area. Jim also liked spending time with Rick, talking about education and about teaching. He saw Rick as a dedicated, hard-working, and well-liked teacher who was effective in the classroom and who, like himself, enjoyed teaching adolescents. What Jim observed in Rick's classroom confirmed some of the intuitive notions he had been feeling all along about the universality of the concept of effectiveness, tempered by the context of the learning situation. By helping to complete the work of this research project, Jim could indeed feel a sense of great accomplishment, and that became his personal incentive.

Incentive for Donna differed somewhat, although she shared Jim's liking for talking about education and teaching with a masterful teacher like Rick. She also shared Jim's enthusiasm for learning more about qualitative research by being involved in the year-long collaborative project. Donna had an added incentive for doing the research—the knowledge that a successfully completed project would result in presentations and publications, two important evaluation criteria for university professors. However, for Donna, incentive went beyond tangibles such as these; she enjoyed the challenges inherent in a jointly initiated and jointly analyzed study. She also enjoyed working with Jim, who was her doctoral advisee at the University of Georgia and who was completing his dissertation in an area closely related to the collaborative project.

Rick had several incentives for participating in the project. For instance, it gave him the opportunity to "test" the methods and ideas he had been using with reluctant learners and low-ability readers to

stimulate their interest and involvement in literature. Inherent in this incentive, of course, was the risk of finding that his methods and ideas were inappropriate or unsuccessful. Donna and Jim's presence in Rick's classroom provided him with the opportunity to receive objective feedback from people who were not observing him as part of the promotion and tenure process or to fulfill annual observation and evaluation requirements. As a spinoff of Donna and Jim's regular visits, Rick enjoyed trading suggestions and ideas with educators who not only had extensive backgrounds in public education, but who also had expertise in conducting educational research. Rick had the chance to pick the brains of other professionals while never leaving his own classroom. Finally, Rick had developed a real curiosity about qualitative research as a result of his earlier work and discussions with Deborah Dillon during her microethnographic study of his classroom. The opportunity to be a co-researcher in this current project, rather than to just be observed, was both flattering and attractive. Rick looked at qualitative and collaborative research as a beacon of hope, as research that dealt with the reality of the classroom. He appreciated observing what was actually happening, rather than hypothesizing about what might happen. Rick saw this kind of research as a common ground for cooperative efforts between those who prepare teachers and those who teach in the public schools.

Trust

As mentioned earlier, Rick and Donna had worked together on research projects and had established a feeling of trust. Jim had worked with Donna before, and thus the two of them were familiar with each other's working styles. Hence, at the start of the project, a sense of trust existed between Rick and Donna and between Jim and Donna but not yet between Rick and Jim. Jim and Rick first "met" in a three-way conference call involving all of us prior to Jim's joining the project. However, Jim did not meet Rick in person until the first day he observed Rick's class. Jim sensed that both he and Rick suspected the other to be "okay" because they placed credence in the introductions and recommendations of Donna. Rick and Jim established a feeling of trust after just a few meetings, a fact Jim attributes to their confidence in one another's expertise and their sense of a common purpose. All three of the researchers agreed that a pervading sense of collegiality and trust added to the success of the project.

Shared Vision

Our shared vision became more apparent as we continued to collect the data and interpret the findings. We were constantly reminded of the need to be guided by our original questions, yet at the same time to be flexible enough to avoid missing what was actually happening in the classroom. As the year progressed and the students became increasingly open and receptive to Rick's style of teaching, we all recognized that our earlier decision to capture the realities of the classroom, rather than be tied to our original questions, was a good decision. For example, one of our findings suggested that a quality of Rick's instruction that students really valued was his willingness to listen to them, to be on their side rather than against them. Students told us they enjoyed hearing Rick read aloud and having the opportunity to respond in whole-class discussion. Had he not listened to them, he might have favored one-on-one and small-group peer conferences over whole-class discussion. While basing one's instruction solely on student input is not always good practice, it demonstrates the effects of being flexible in attempting to answer our original questions.

We found our five selected focal students willing to share what they found meaningful in Rick's oral and written instruction. As our key informants, these five students became somewhat like co-researchers. For example, one day a focal student reminded us that we should have been videotaping a particular lesson segment that we had missed taping. On another day, a different focal student suggested that a particular discussion would have been more successful had Rick used a different story. We believe that our shared vision for what this collaborative project could become may have been shared by some of the students as well. This was indeed a delightful and welcome surprise.

Diversity

The final, critical factor, diversity, represented in our dissimilar educational and experiential backgrounds, strengthened our objectivity in terms of collecting and interpreting the data. What one of us would see and explain one way, another would see and explain in a different way, or in some cases, reconfirm. That process kept our heads clear and kept us open to each other's renditions of what was happening in the classroom.

Jim's teaching experience had been in a completely different setting from Rick's present situation. Jim had taught in a suburban,

middle-class, practically all-white junior high school in the Midwest. Our collaborative research project was carried out in a rural, lower-socioeconomic, largely black high school in the Southeast. Initially, Jim worried about the value of his experience in terms of its applicability to such a different setting. Throughout the study, however, he was reassured that his insights were valuable and that the difference in his experiential background from that of the other two researchers was actually a benefit.

Donna's public school teaching experience bore some similarities to both Rick's and Jim's. She had taught for five years in lower-socioeconomic neighborhoods in Austin and Houston, Texas, where the majority of her students were from families of Mexican American or African American backgrounds. She also taught for seven years in a predominantly white middle school, though not suburban in nature like Jim's school. Unlike both Jim's and Rick's English-teaching backgrounds, Donna's teaching specialty was social studies.

Reflections and Recommendations

Clemson (1990) has outlined four developmental stages in the collaborative research process, and even though we were not aware of them before the project began, we can now see how our study progressed through these same stages. The first stage, termed the "Carrot and the Stick," is what Clemson described as getting the grant and wondering what the funding agency wants done for its monetary support. In our case, we experienced similar reactions. We were excited about getting the grant, and we worried how we could live up to NCTE's expectations, given Rick's move to a site further away from the university. It was a phase that had already been realized prior to Jim's arrival on the project. The second phase is termed the "Joy of Collaboration." We, as concerned researchers, enjoyed sharing our respective insights with each other. We each learned from one another, and we were interested in having sounding boards for our ideas. The third phase, the "Puzzle," is best characterized by the dilemma we found ourselves in when some of our original guiding questions were no longer applicable to what we were observing. We did not want to answer them in any contrived fashion. We all hoped the problem was temporary; it was, but it was unnerving just the same. The fourth stage, "Synthesis," occurred when we attempted to find meaning in all the data, and, particularly, when we began the arduous task of generating assertions. We enjoyed our final conferences as a team, reliving the past academic

year—students, events, lessons—and we took pride in knowing that our common purpose for the project had been achieved. We had learned how to do research together.

After completing the final report for NCTE, we breathed a sigh of relief and looked forward to the next challenge: preparing a manuscript for publication. Prior to starting on the manuscript, Donna presented a summary of the study's findings at a small qualitative research conference. The participants at that conference were enthusiastic about the findings, but they were also quick to point out problems in several different areas. In short, they challenged us to take another look at some of the data that we had chosen to "downplay" because of its sensitive nature. As of this writing, we are still involved in that analysis.

Given the opportunity, would we undertake another collaborative project of this magnitude? We would—and for three reasons:

1. In the present study, the three of us shared the role of researcher. We shared the responsibility for finding answers to the research questions, and we were sensitive to other questions as they came up. Often, discussions that took place in our three-way team conferences raised questions that were pedagogically stimulating. In some cases, subsequent discussions provided the answers to our questions. In at least one instance, a discussion among the three of us provided the spark that led to an action research project designed and implemented solely by Rick.

Our study involved the intertwining of roles. Although the planning of the project was completed before Jim entered the picture, each of us participated in revising the research plan where necessary. We each were simultaneously involved in analyzing, interpreting, and writing about our findings. As we confirmed our hunches, we found that newly collected data, further analyses, and alternative interpretations generated still more hunches. It was this intellectually stimulating process that we valued and would recommend to others.

2. Juanie Noland (1991), of Tuskegee Institute, has noted that the position of the International Reading Association on teacher-conducted research was made clear in a resolution proclaiming that "the best decisions are made by teachers who conduct research in their own classrooms" (p. 36). Throughout our professional reading, we are continually made aware of the now infamous gap between research and practice. We believe involvement in the collaborative research process has allowed us to see how that gap can be bridged. Involving class-

room teachers in research design, implementation, data collection, and data analysis makes it possible for them to be both the producers and consumers of research. We are reminded of Early's (1982) recommendation that as responsible educators, we should not expect research to dictate practice; rather, we should view research as contributing to the belief systems that teachers develop as they observe their own students in their own classrooms.

3. As co-researchers, we were also learners. Pearson's (1991) "Consensus Model" outlines a procedure similar to the one we followed in our collaboration. That is, we acknowledged the importance of modeling the task, basing the task in an authentic context, scaffolding the different parts of the task, and allowing for shared control of the learning. As co-researchers, we did more than read about qualitative research; we experienced it.

What once were merely concepts explored in methods texts—e.g., participant observation, constant comparative analysis, theoretical memos, collaborative research, and interpretive vignettes—now have taken on real meaning for us. In the future, when we read about these concepts in a methods text, our prior knowledge will allow for our better understanding. The wealth of all this experience and the enjoyment that can come from conducting a collaborative research project have added immeasurably to each of our professional lives. We recommend the process and the numerous benefits that can accrue from learning to do research together.

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9 Working It Out: Collaboration as Subject and Method

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The current rhetoric surrounding teacher professionalism and educational reform heralds changes in schools with potential for profoundly affecting the daily work lives of teachers. In restructured schools, teachers are expected to play a prominent role in school governance, in the construction of curriculum, and in decision making about many aspects of instruction and assessment. In short, the proposed changes represent a radical revision in the nature of teaching, in the school as workplace, and in the professional opportunities and experiences of teachers. Although many of these proposals currently originate with university-based researchers, school administrators, and policymakers, their clear intention is for teachers to play increasingly central roles, not primarily as consumers of others' ideas, but rather as implementors and evaluators of reforms they themselves have helped to create. There are compelling arguments for these changes in fundamental roles and relationships within schools. Overcoming our long tradition of teacher isolation and autonomy, however, depends on building new structures within and across schools for supporting teachers who elect to work together to bring about change.

Efforts to strengthen and promote teachers' collaboration with each other and with school staff and administrators have taken different forms, depending on the context and purposes. Over more than a decade, various concepts of teacher-to-teacher collaboration have been put forth at local, regional, and national levels by networks such as those created by the National Writing Project (NWP), Bread Loaf, and the Prospect School. The NWP, consisting of more than 150 sites that adhere to a common philosophy, is an example of an organization providing the impetus for creative school-university partnerships

based on the opportunity for teachers of writing to share their expertise with one another and to be or become writers themselves. While all NWP projects share a basic philosophy, each project has developed its own distinctive characteristics and activities to differing extents, depending on local needs and concerns. Participants in the Philadelphia Writing Project (PhilWP), for example, have used the school-university partnership[1] as a context for focusing on writing in relation to broader issues of urban schooling, teachers as researchers, and literacy learning through the resources of cultural and linguistic diversity. The project has also inquired into the nature and processes of collaboration itself—among teachers in and across schools, between teachers and students, and among teachers, administrators, and parents—a primary focus of the project.

As a school-based teacher-consultant and a university-based director of PhilWP, we (the co-authors of this paper) have been exploring issues in collaboration from a number of perspectives, with the writing project as our site of inquiry. PhilWP was established in 1986 as a teacher collaborative committed to strengthening writing, reading, and learning; through the project, teachers network with other teachers across disciplines and grade levels, K–12, and conduct "systematic, intentional inquiries" (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1990) into their own practice. The project provides a supportive setting for generating different types of teacher research, including journals, essays, oral inquiries, and classroom studies (Lytle and Cochran-Smith, 1990). As the project's programs have expanded to include summer workshops for adolescent writers, federally funded networks linking new and experienced urban teachers, teacher-taught institutes for principals, and many other opportunities for teacher-to-teacher collaboration, the project has sought ways to make every program a research process. Thus the membership, in general, benefits from the experiences of individuals and groups of teachers, and the writing project is strengthened as a community for teacher research—a community which aims to contribute to the professional growth of teachers and, by disseminating their work, to contribute to the generation of knowledge in the field as well.

In this chapter, we describe and analyze our collaborative research on one of these programs, the "cross-visitation" program that has been ongoing since its inception in the first year of the writing project. This program enables pairs of experienced K–12 teachers to enhance their own practices and intellectual lives by visiting each others' classrooms during the school day. Through this visitation, these

teachers have the opportunity to build long-term, reciprocal relationships which are integrated with and immediately responsive to their day-to-day situations. As one aspect of the school-university partnership and one activity of the teacher-consultant program, the cross-visitation program is designed to improve curriculum and instruction by promoting collaborative inquiry into teaching and, more specifically, into language, literacy, and learning in urban classrooms.

Participating teachers contribute to the ongoing research on the cross-visitation program in two ways: they document their own visitation experiences in the classroom, and they also help to collect, analyze, and interpret data about the program as a whole. One of us (Fecho) has been a participating teacher in the program, cross-visiting with several teachers inside and outside of his school. The other (Lytle) has played several roles in implementing the program, including helping to establish and maintain relationships with key personnel in the district. Together, we have shaped the evolving design of the study, coordinated data collection and analysis, and authored and co-authored papers based on the research (Fecho, 1987; Lytle and Fecho, 1991). Clearly this project is a complex one, involving the two of us as research coordinators and many participating teachers both as cross-visitors and as researchers studying their own and other teachers' cross-visitations. It is this very complexity that created the need and the context for looking specifically at what happens when collaboration becomes both the subject and the method of study.

Collaboration as Subject

The cross-visitation program (the subject of the research) was designed so that teachers could make sense of and improve upon their everyday practices, not by imitating routines and strategies, but rather by questioning, observing, documenting, and discussing their work in relation to the work of others. In contrast to peer coaching,[2] cross-visitation draws on recent work in reflective teaching (Schon, 1983, 1987; Elbaz, 1983; Zumwalt, 1982) and collegial learning (Little, 1989; Hargreaves, 1989, 1990). Teachers who cross-visit need to create a "collaborative culture," one in which participants work voluntarily with one another over time. As a form of teacher-generated staff development, the program is similar to Sparks and Loucks-Horsley's (1990) "inquiry model," reflecting a "basic belief in teachers' ability to formulate valid questions about their own practice" (p. 243). This approach contrasts with models of staff development which are training oriented, indi-

vidually guided, focused on observation/assessment, or designed for specific curriculum or program development. The emphasis here is on the act of teaching as research (Duckworth, 1986; Britton, 1987) and on providing structures that enable teacher inquiry to be integrated with daily practice and to be increasingly recognized as an essential dimension of teachers' professional practice and growth.

As co-researchers interested in how these intentions would play out in practice, we began with a broad set of questions. What does it mean for teachers to work together in the previously private spaces of each other's classrooms? What kinds of relationships are developed and how do they evolve over time? How are these partnerships different for different grade levels, subjects, schools, and subdistricts? What questions and concerns do teachers articulate initially and over time about their own teaching and students' learning? What facilitates and what constrains the formation of these alliances for mutual support as learners and teachers? Do teachers influence each other's thinking, and if so, how? What can we learn about children's language and learning from teachers who have the opportunity to collaborate in these ways?

How Cross-Visitation Works: Program and Research Design

In its simplest form, cross-visitation involves a teacher-consultant (a TC—a teacher who has participated in a PhilWP summer institute) collaborating with a partner teacher (a colleague from the School District of Philadelphia). These teachers work together during regular school hours in the classroom of one or the other teacher. This is made possible through the assistance of a writing support teacher (a long-term substitute—one for each of seven subdistricts—hired to work specifically with cross-visiting teachers to ensure continuity) who takes the place of the TC or partner teacher in the classroom for that day. The purpose of these visitations is mutual observation, systematic reflection, and discussion of issues related to theory and practice.

There is a flexibility surrounding this basic format, and variations abound. TCs can cross-visit with each other. Writing support teachers often take part in PhilWP summer institutes and can function as TCs. Partner teachers can be colleagues within the TC's own building, come from surrounding and/or feeder schools, or even work in neighboring subdistricts within the Philadelphia system. TCs and partner teachers have been known to work across grade levels and subject areas, thus providing unusual opportunities for elementary and high school teachers to share expertise in each other's classrooms.

These collaborations often come about through personal contact between a TC and a partner teacher, but viable visitations have also emerged from principal or district supervisor requests. Frequency and duration of visitations vary, but it is recommended that a cross-visitation partnership occur about once per month and extend as much as possible through the course of a school year. In addition, TCs are encouraged to cross-visit with a limited number of partner teachers in order to support quality, inquiry-based collaboration as opposed to sporadic, hit-or-miss demonstrations. Levels of participation, both by TCs and partner teachers, are determined by those participants and remain voluntary. In 1991–92, it is anticipated that about 100 teacher-consultants will participate in the cross-visitation program (approximately half of the PhilWP teacher-consultants currently in the writing project). All new teacher-consultants (those who became TCs in summer 1991) will cross-visit with "mentor TCs" who have been part of the project over several years.

Three separate institutions have enabled this program to occur.[3] While all three have played important roles in locating funding and developing the appropriate administrative mechanisms to ensure that multiple teacher partnerships can take place, the actual program—in the sense of its substantive content, processes, and local meanings—was deliberately left for the participating teachers to invent over time. As seems to be evident in this description of the process, cross-visitation starts with a premise of two teachers willing to co-labor in each other's classroom during the regular school day and then allow that collaboration to be negotiated in ways that are both direct (e.g., the participating teachers) and indirect (e.g., administrators connected to the process). This complexity of negotiation represents what is both advantageous and problematic about the program, as we will suggest in the discussion that follows.

The processes of studying cross-visitation began with the inception of the program. Teachers recorded their cross-visiting experiences in journals, brought their issues and questions to district and project monthly meetings, and presented their first year's work at local and regional conferences (Fecho, 1987; Goldfarb, 1987; Pincus, 1987). The flexibility of the program's design and the care taken *not* to present cross-visitation as a predetermined "model" and thus subject it to reification, however, resulted, from the beginning, in a variety of practices and interpretations emerging and coexisting in the district. Over the first year, it became apparent that there was a need to catalog cross-visitations' varied practices and to use cases or examples for

deliberate inquiry into teachers' experiences in different situations. Unlike more scripted approaches to staff development, which predominated in the district as a whole (i.e., training workshops, demonstration lessons, implementation of a standardized curriculum), the program of cross-visitation invited teacher construction, innovation, critical reflection, and self-evaluation.

Because we were interested in the range and variation of the practices that would emerge, we made plans to collect data by using a variety of strategies, including (a) teacher logs: monthly records of activities of teacher-consultants with particular teachers and schools; (b) teacher journals: more detailed accounts of particular visitations; (c) interviews: semi-structured, in-depth, retrospective accounts by a cross-section of participants, including teacher-consultants, partner teachers, principals, writing support teachers, and ultimately, students; and (d) other forms of teacher writing: essays, classroom studies, dialogue journals. To make sense of the data, we have used standard methods of qualitative analysis, including, for each data set, a review of the entire body of data, identification of typical and discrepant instances by methods of analytic induction, and content analysis of various texts (i.e., logs, journals, interview transcripts, surveys, and other teacher-generated materials). For this chapter, we have drawn on a subset of this body of data taken from the first phase of the ongoing study, seventeen interviews of PhilWP teacher-consultants and excerpts from selected writings.

What We Learned about Teacher-to-Teacher Collaboration

Three major patterns emerged from the interview data. The first revealed teachers' ambivalence toward isolation, their uncertainty about remaining separated in their classrooms, yet their reluctance to open up their practice to the eyes of their peers. A second pattern involved reciprocity, teachers' efforts to establish working partnerships in which neither became pegged as expert or novice. The third involved the need to negotiate shifts in roles and relationships with administrators within and across buildings. We will briefly describe each of these patterns.[4]

Most apparent in the interviews were teachers' dilemmas about isolation, a phenomenon of teacher culture they viewed as both problematic and comforting. Sociological researchers of schools as workplaces (Lortie, 1986; Bolin and Falk, 1987; Hargreaves, 1990) have noted this dual effect of teacher isolation, that it creates an atmosphere of both autonomy and estrangement. The study of cross-visitation

illuminated this in several specific ways. Teachers reported that prior to their experiences with the program, other adults rarely entered their classrooms. If such visits did occur, they were intended either for evaluation or simply for camaraderie. Detachment from activities with other adults left teachers feeling unsupported and undervalued, though these sentiments were rarely articulated because being alone had become so habitual. At the same time, however, these teachers spoke of the benefits of solitude. Providing a cloak of security, the option to "close the door" enables teachers to retreat when they need to. Subtly associated with this norm of privacy is the norm of competence, the idea that good teachers are teachers who rarely refer students for outside disciplinary intervention and who are always present and accessible for their own students. While initially appealing, the concept of cross-visitation seemed to sit uneasily between risk and opportunity, with little prior assurance possible that going out or having company would alter established patterns in beneficial ways.

However, the teachers interviewed, once having crossed the threshold of another's classroom, spoke of experiences which were rich and vitalizing and obviously would have been unattainable had they remained in their own settings. Practicing cross-visitation within their own buildings enabled teachers to acquire a broader perspective about the school as a learning community. Teachers became conscious of their interdependency, perhaps only tacitly recognized up to this moment. Sharing and comparing instructional programs heightened teachers' awareness of the school as perceived by students, whose day-to-day and year-to-year schedules require many adjustments to diverse and sometimes conflicting teacher styles and expectations. Student needs for both change and continuity became subjects of discussion. Some teachers had opportunities to renew relationships with students from previous years and to initiate contact with students they would encounter in the future. Through visiting each other's classrooms over time, teachers identified common problems in curriculum which sometimes lent themselves to joint rather than individual solutions. Moving outside of their schools also caused some teachers to see their own situations differently. In one instance, a veteran teacher with few expectations for change in her own school returned optimistic, willing to persist with her own colleagues in relationships she had long since abandoned.

"Going public" also provided teachers with new lenses for viewing their own classrooms. They reported seeing these familiar places as both more challenging and more intellectually interesting than they

had realized. Lessons that failed became objects of study, like windows into practice. Colleagues became resources to tap before, during, and after a lesson or unit. Observing, talking, and being observed allowed teachers, in the words of one person interviewed, "to see myself in ways that I had never seen myself before." Often this occurred because visiting teachers inquired about classroom practices that had become unquestioned routines, "invisible" to the classroom teacher herself; making these practices visible by explaining them led both teachers to further questions and self-critical inquiry.

A second recurrent theme which emerged from the data focused on teachers' expectations for their relationships with their partner teachers. Many alluded to problems associated with assumptions about expertise. As one teacher put it:

> I was very sensitive to the fact that I wanted to go in, not as any kind of an expert, but just as someone who heard some things . . . that I found very interesting and perhaps they would, too. . . . I know I'm very sensitive to people coming in, and without any background on what I'm doing, to start giving me advice on how this ought to be done or that ought to be done.

Teacher-consultants were immediately attuned to the problems of a "collaboration among unequals," recognizing that many of their partner teachers had little prior experience with this approach to peer collaboration, many having had, instead, long experience with a model based on knowledge transmission from expert to novice. A primary-grade teacher explained the difference in perception by saying:

> I see myself as another second-grade teacher coming to talk to a second-grade teacher, but they see me as someone who is coming with some expertise attributed to me. And I think that needs to be downplayed in order for something to succeed, for it really to be a collaboration as opposed to instruction.

In effect, cross-visitations often began with teacher-consultants and partner teachers having different concepts of the activity. Over time, in order to sustain the collaboration, they negotiated new agendas that reflected their mutual understanding.

Often, this perceived difference in knowledge was translated into an expectation that the teacher-consultant would be equipped with magical teaching strategies that would "work," no matter what the classroom context. The teacher-consultants' experiences with collaboration during the summer institutes had heightened their awareness of distinctive features of particular children, classrooms, schools,

and communities. They viewed teaching as a deeply contextualized, deliberative, and reflective activity, not a process of simply applying techniques proven to be effective across settings. However, in their initial encounters with partner teachers, teacher-consultants would often be asked for demonstration lessons, a practice that supervisors have typically used for staff development. This attraction of direct instruction seemed to have at least three additional sources. First, when cross-visitation was interpreted as doing demonstrations, the visiting teachers became the observed, rather than the observers. Second, they were, in essence, being asked to establish their credibility as teachers able to cope with the exigencies of the classroom. And finally, the practice was associated with teachers' beliefs that modeling is a critical component of children's learning.

Our interviews with the participating teachers revealed that showing someone how to do something, rather than engaging with them in the doing, did not violate expectations and thus allowed a collaboration to begin on familiar territory. Most partners eventually worked past this starting point, however, successfully constructing more reciprocal relationships. A critical ingredient seemed to be working together over time so that underlying assumptions about learning and teaching could be opened up for discussion and scrutiny. Taking and sharing field notes on the other's classroom, working directly with a small group of the other's students, looking together at children's work, keeping a dialogue journal, planning together—all of these activities marked the collaboration as mutual inquiry, not transmission of knowledge from one person to the other. These activities made public the processes of gathering and analyzing data and thus made information about day-to-day practices accessible to both teachers. The challenge appeared to be finding ways to strengthen, to make more explicit, this often imprecise link between collaboration and inquiry.

A third theme in this initial set of interview transcripts related to teachers' need to negotiate shifts in roles, often with their building administrators but also with district personnel. New forms of collaboration were necessary as teachers began to move more actively around their buildings to work with other teachers, and as they notified principals that they would be out of the building for a particular day to work in another school. Unlike forms of staff development that typically occur outside regular school hours (e.g., workshops), cross-visitation alters the daily work life of teachers and students. Many teachers participating in this program had never previously observed

another teacher in their school and had never visited another building during the school day. Each activity in the process set a precedent that needed to be considered and negotiated at building and district levels.

Some teachers made their own contacts with teachers outside the building and set up patterns of cross-visitation. Others were asked by district personnel to respond to specific requests of principals for help with their school writing program. Frequently, it was difficult to make direct contact with the teachers who were to be involved in the cross-visitation until the actual day the project began, and sometimes teachers were asked by the principal to work with other teachers who did not volunteer for this opportunity to collaborate. Thus, sometimes teachers initiated and controlled the contexts for their interactions with other teachers, while at other times they needed to be responsive to the requests of others.

These shifts in traditional roles were complicated by the fact that principals were not asked to monitor the specific practices of these visiting teachers, yet they rightly saw the teacher-consultants as resources for instructional improvement in their schools and wanted to use their skills to meet what they perceived as their teachers' needs. Also, principals of teacher-consultants were sometimes uncomfortable about having them leave their own buildings, where they were regarded as professionally active and especially committed members of the faculty. All of these shifts in roles and responsibilities entailed changes in daily routines and behavior which in turn reverberated in several directions, subtly altering teacher and school culture.

As noted above, making cross-visitation happen involved an obvious network of new arrangements between and among teachers, principals, supervisors, writing support teachers, writing project staff, and others connected to the program. Yet at the same time that its surface features were highly visible, its actual workings were largely invisible. What teachers did together in their classrooms, how these interactions affected their conceptual frameworks for teaching and their actual practices, and the consequences of enabling teachers to construct this new form of professional development for the system as a whole, were and are difficult to uncover. While these initial interviews suggested many exciting benefits and possibilities for teachers collaborating during the day in their own classrooms and illuminated some of the constraints, there is a need for much more information, not only from the perspectives of teacher-consultants, but also from those of their partners, the writing support teachers, principals, and students involved. In the next part of this chapter, we show how what we have

been learning about collaboration as subject has informed the evolution of our method.

Collaboration as Method

As indicated above, cross-visitation is enmeshed in a systemwide collaboration of some complexity. Teachers, school-based and central office administrators, researchers, and curriculum development personnel all have a hand in the daily maintenance of the program. For one teacher to visit another teacher, administrators must be made aware of the meeting, a writing support teacher (long-term substitute) must be scheduled from the district office, lessons must be prepared, and records of participation must be completed. The program exists through the financial and administrative support of the school district and the adjunct curriculum development organization, the academic support of a research university, and the collegial support from members of a teacher-driven writing project that links the school system and the university. While the emphasis of cross-visitation is on a relatively small number of teachers working together over time, the structures that support such visitation are wide ranging, both horizontally and vertically.

Rationale and Approach to Collaboration as Method

Given the complex structure and the open-ended nature of the program, it quickly became obvious that it would be important not just to make cross-visitation happen, but to study it as well. Because the specific forms and outcomes of teacher-to-teacher collaboration were not predetermined, it became essential to gather information about what was going on within successful partnerships and about probable obstacles in order to capture some of the richness and diversity that occurred within this structure. The research design clearly needed to be participatory, involving teacher-researchers and teacher-educator researchers in a number of different roles. The findings needed to be disseminated quickly, providing immediate feedback for practice, so that the work of the group as a whole would be accessible to all teachers involved. The research was, in effect, an integral part of the process, done initially to generate and disseminate knowledge about collaboration to the local community.

This blurring of the lines between research and practice helps to explain why the circle of researchers widened as the project progressed. To study teachers working with teachers, networking with

support groups, and negotiating with other district personnel. researchers needed to bring a variety of backgrounds and connections to the program. There were no longer clear lines between the researcher and the researched. With the co-authors of this chapter acting as central coordinators of the study, the research team grew spontaneously as it became obvious that participating in cross-visitation and studying it were so intimately related. Teachers acted as informants, but they also acted as interviewers. Serendipitously, a district-level administrator doing graduate work was enlisted to conduct additional interviews with teachers. Graduate students, teachers, and university researchers came together to code and analyze the data. As various drafts of the reports emerged, members of PhilWP who had been familiar with cross-visitation since its inception were asked to comment on the findings. At several points, the project's monthly meetings became writing workshops in which teachers previewed drafts in order to check conclusions against the consensus of the group.

While this description may imply that the study of cross-visitation has been haphazard in its execution, we would argue that these spontaneously emerging strategies are appropriate for the method of research, particularly in the exploratory stages of the investigation. While we did not foresee this wider involvement from the start, it became increasingly obvious that taking on multiple roles and tasks as data gatherers, transcribers, analyzers, and writers enriched individual participants' opportunities to contribute. If these methods were messy and complex, they provided a diversity of perspectives that would have been impossible if a team composed only of university researchers or only of teachers had ventured into the study. Teachers participating in cross-visitation were already involved in a form of teacher research. As they began collectively to think aloud about their experiences, they became both creators and consumers of the study's findings. In this manner, using collaborative research methods to study a collaborative endeavor became somewhat like watching a play within a play.

What We Learned from the Collaborative Process

We do not regard the inexact line between practice and research as a problem; rather, we have come to see it as an asset. Teacher interviewers understood the school system, had considerable experience in a number of different districts and school communities, and felt some personal investment in learning about the experience of others. Periodic reports of data stimulated reflection on practice by teachers par-

ticipating in these conversations. The contagion of good ideas for negotiating relationships with other teachers and administrators occurred from the beginning of the project, spurred on by our efforts to document what was going on. The design for the study emerged from the practice of cross-visitation and has continued to evolve, fed from the inside by teachers' experiences and from the outside by writings about aspects of teacher culture and collaboration (see, for example, Hargreaves, 1989, 1990; Little, 1989) and case studies of other teachers attempting partnerships for curricular and instructional change (Rorschach and Whitney, 1986).

When collaboration is both the subject and method of study, however, problems emerge that are not easily resolved. A preeminent concern has been the appropriateness of critique, i.e., the difficulties of participating in and simultaneously investigating a collaborative venture. An episode that occurred at a PhilWP meeting helps to explain what we mean here. When the program was just beginning, teachers were asked to take part in a reflective conversation[5] concerning the word *collaboration*. As would be expected, many positive responses were shared. However, one teacher reminded us that during World War II, certain French citizens collaborated with the Nazis; they offered their services to the other side. To a certain extent, those who conduct collaborative research across the increasingly permeable boundaries of school and university must grapple with the same problem. Teachers studying teachers, even in collaboration with other teachers, may be regarded by their peers as having abandoned their community, if not actually informing on its members. University researchers working with teacher-researchers become conscious of different styles and purposes regarding inquiry, and may find themselves working on the margins of what much of the academy regards as acceptable practices of research. Then, being neither chalk nor gown, the collaborators run the risks of alienating the very audiences they wish to unite.

Issues of collaboration and critique were not resolved in the process of the research reported here. In fact, as the circle of the investigation widened, some problems were exacerbated. As we recorded teachers discussing resistance they met from other teachers, we worried about having to feature teachers speaking less than glowingly about others. Discussing the difficulties of trying to install an "inside out" or "bottom up" form of staff development in a traditional school and district structure is sensitive, because this critique, while perceived by some as healthy and necessary, could offend those who have invested so much in the program. Even writing this paragraph causes

us to wonder about the impact of our words and who might feel silenced or misrepresented as we write.

Our collaborative study of cross-visitation is a work in progress. However, we can, at this time, identify some findings and consider their implications. Quite simply, we find that as unique and rewarding as it is for teachers to open their classrooms to their peers, this act is not done without complications. Diminishing isolation also diminished privacy, while sharing good practice also meant exposing uncertainties. When one teacher enters the room of another teacher, new problems accompany the new rewards.

This duality is particularly problematic when participants need to envision expanded or altered roles for themselves or for others in the organization. While a program such as cross-visitation is open-ended and allows teachers and administrators considerable flexibility, it simultaneously places new demands upon them. While the program offers a framework within which to work, it also leaves open for negotiation roles which previously were cut and dried. While delimiting these roles too tightly would seriously constrain how participants used the program, the openness that is necessary to allow the flexibility also allows for individual and, perhaps, conflicting variations. Yet it seems to us that programs encouraging teacher-to-teacher collaboration must be tolerant of a certain range of outcomes. A benefit of this tolerance is that all participants feel more invested in the process.

Another complication of collegial learning is the imprecise link between collaboration and inquiry. If collaboration is to have more than immediate impact, it must be, as Hargreaves (1989) suggests, "searching or wide-ranging" enough to counter the reified culture of teacher as individual. Therefore, programs which seek to unite teachers within classrooms must allow them to do substantive work. Less emphasis should be placed on the passing of information, and more support, in the form of structures, personnel, and work conceptions, must be provided. Inquiry, systematic and intentional, must coexist with the sharing of practice, by which we mean that teachers go beyond sharing information to use these opportunities to pose questions, collect classroom data for each other, and become, in the process, an interpretive community.

This intent to strengthen the tie between collaboration and research speaks to a third complication. When teachers work as teams, there must be reciprocity within the relationship. Participants may have different agendas for initiating the collaboration, yet they all must take from the relationship as much as they invest. For the

teacher-consultants involved in cross-visitation, this meant establishing relationships with peers which involved more substance than "doing demos." Without an agreed upon agenda that promises to reward both participants, collegial partnerships become, as Hargreaves (1989) writes, bounded. The TCs, in this case, tried to avoid situations where mutual investment was unbalanced. Instead, cross-visitation seemed to flourish where all participants were committed to inquiry over time and to the co-construction of knowledge across classroom and school boundaries.

Finally, problem solving about collaboration seemed critical to the process of cross-visitation. It was important, in successful collaboration, that teachers and administrators were willing to negotiate openly, to tolerate uncertainty, and to be creative in surmounting obstacles. A sense that all involved were operating in good faith needed to be cultivated. It was also important for the participants to have a support community—in this case, the writing project—on which to depend. Giroux (1984) has written that teachers need to "build alliances with other teachers" which "develop around new forms of social relations" (p. 39). Cross-visitation provides a context for exploring what these new relations might be. However, because of the cultures of teaching and schooling already in place, this exploration brings new complexities along with its possibilities.

Our collaborative research continues. We have become increasingly committed to making the critical connection between teacher-to-teacher collaboration and the processes of inquiry. Studying ways in which teachers work together makes visible what teachers come to know about their practice, their collegial relationships, and their unique position in the research community. Integrating inquiry with practice provides a structure that enables teachers to reflect together on their day-to-day work, and thus to restructure their own classrooms. These individual efforts may seem to some a circumscribed strategy for instituting change, but taken together, they represent a radical and essential approach to school reform.

Notes

1. This partnership is between the School District of Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania, with support being provided by the Philadelphia Alliance for Teaching Humanities in the Schools (PATHS).

2. For a more extended discussion of the differences between cross-visitation and peer coaching, see Lytle and Fecho, 1991.

3. The three partners have been (1) the School District of Philadelphia— especially the district-level supervisors and principals, but also district (now called regional) superintendents and others who work at the system level and are members of the PhilWP Advisory Board; (2) staff of the Philadelphia Alliance for Teaching Humanities in the Schools (PATHS)—now called the Philadelphia Partnership for Education—which has been instrumental in implementing the writing-across-the-curriculum project in Philadelphia for more than five years; and (3) the Philadelphia Writing Project, whose teacher-consultants are K–12 teachers who have participated in one or more summer institutes focusing on theoretical frameworks and classroom practices related to writing, learning, and literacy.

4. For a more detailed discussion of these data, including excerpts from the interview transcripts, see Lytle and Fecho, 1991.

5. This is one of the documentary processes developed by Patricia Carini and teachers at the Prospect School in Bennington, Vermont, and used extensively in the Philadelphia Writing Project through the leadership of teacher-consultants who have worked with Carini and have been involved in the Teachers Learning Cooperative.

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Joy Kreeft Peyton is a research associate at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C. Her interest in interactive writing and literacy development was sparked in 1980, when she began collaborating with teachers to implement and study the dialogue journal writing and computer network writing of native English speakers and students learning English as a second language, both hearing and deaf. She has written numerous articles with her teacher-collaborators about dialogue journal writing and interactive writing on computer networks, including *Network-Based Classrooms: Promises and Realities* (Cambridge University Press, 1993). As associate director of the National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education, she is working to assure that the most up-to-date information about literacy issues and practices is disseminated to teachers, administrators, and policymakers.

Carol Porter is the director of instruction for communication arts at Mundelein High School in Mundelein, Illinois, where she also teaches reading and English classes. She has taught language arts in grades 6–8 as well as college composition classes. The collaborative research project in this publication has been presented at the National Reading Conference and NCTE. She contributed "Student-Created Units: Choice, Collaboration, and Connections," a chapter in Kathy Short and Kathryn Pierce's *Talking about Books: Creating Literate Communities* (Heinemann, 1990). Over the past three years, she has studied alternatives to traditional assessments with teacher-colleague Janell Cleland. They have presented at the Whole Language Umbrella Conference, NCTE, IRA, and various state and local conferences. Their collaboration has resulted in the book *Beyond Assessment: The Portfolio as a Learning Strategy* (Heinemann, 1993).

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